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Keep upstate aid promise

Paterson's vow to retain fund is important to Western New York

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New Gov. David A. Paterson's stated recommitment to his predecessor's promise of upstate aid is welcome. Now he has to make that promise stick, and that's where lawmakers can be of some assistance.

Paterson, making his first trip since succeeding Eliot L. Spitzer, went to Rochester to assure upstaters that the promises made in Spitzer's January "State of Upstate" still had meaning and, importantly, that he would champion the idea of a \$1 billion Upstate Revitalization Fund that Spitzer had proposed.

After also renewing commitments to specific plans in Rochester, Paterson turned his attention to Buffalo. The new governor spoke of inner harbor redevelopment, and went on to mention separate efforts in Syracuse, Binghamton, Utica and Rome.

There is much more the state needs to do in Western New York. The UB 2020 initiative to expand the University at Buffalo as a flagship research university is important. So are Niagara Falls redevelopment plans.

None of that should get lost in the urgent immediate need to prepare a budget by the looming April 1 deadline. That date could justifiably slip for a reasonable amount of time, considering the disruptive events of the past few weeks.

And New York must continue to regard upstate economic revival as an investment in the future — or, at least, a staving off of regional fiscal disaster that would cost all New Yorkers, including downstate, dearly.

As things now stand, Wall Street could deliver more blows to state revenues in general and upstate hopes in particular. The state's projected deficit this year is \$4.6 billion, and that number keeps growing.



*You
love
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cover
them.*

Wall Street's roller-coaster ride can make a bad situation even worse, because New York derives one in every five tax dollars from activity in the financial markets.

What New York must do now is refocus on issues and actions, not linger over scandals. Unless more serious legal issues emerge, there is a job to get done. It is imperative that Paterson keep what is now his word not to abandon plans for a \$1 billion Upstate Revitalization Fund.

Spitzer took particular note of the problems facing the upstate economy, and made a bold pledge. Paterson says he will keep that promise. It is indeed a promise that must be kept — not only for the good of Western New York, but for the entire state.

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