



April 30, 2021

Eric Gertler  
President, Empire State Development

**Via Email**

**Re: Publish the Database of Deals**

Dear President Gertler,

We urge Empire State Development (ESD) to publish the Database of Deals immediately.

It has been more than two years since the state allocated \$500,000 [to build a database of the state's economic development projects](#). At last year's February 13th joint legislative hearing on economic development, you told the committee that the database [would be ready by December 2020](#). We understand that 2020 was an extraordinary year, so your statement at this year's February 23rd joint legislative hearing on economic development that the database would be launched in ["a matter of weeks"](#) [seemed reasonable](#). However, over 2 months have passed and still no database has been launched.

As fellow New Yorkers, we are deeply sympathetic to the disruption and distress caused by COVID-19. That said, ESD has had plenty of time to get this done. We have been calling for fundamental improvements in transparency and accountability for State subsidies – including a Database of Deals – since 2015. The legislature concurred and both the State Senate and Assembly included the Database of Deals in their one-house budgets in 2017, 2018 and 2019. [In 2018, we noted](#) that the trial of Alain Kaloyeros and other corporate executives highlighted the urgent need for transparency and independent oversight of state economic development spending, but the public still does not have a way to evaluate the effectiveness of billions of dollars in economic

development spending and business tax subsidies. Six years after a billion-dollar scandal is much longer than New Yorkers should wait for the state to be more transparent about its economic development programs.

We ask you to promptly publish the Database of Deals or explain why ESD has not yet fulfilled its commitment to publish the database of state economic development projects.

Thank you,

John Kaehny  
Executive Director  
Reinvent Albany

Andrew Rein  
President  
Citizens Budget Commission

Betsy Gotbaum  
Executive Director  
Citizens Union

Susan Lerner  
Executive Director  
Common Cause New York

Laura Ladd Bierman  
Executive Director  
League of Women Voters of New York State

Blair Horner  
Executive Director  
NY Public Interest Research Group