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November 21, 2008

The Honorable Deval L. Patrick  
Governor  
Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
State House, Room 360  
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Governor Patrick:

On behalf of the New Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce, I am writing to you to ask that you rescind the \$9 million cut to the Massachusetts Workforce Training Fund (WTF) program which you included in your fiscal action plan announced on October 15, 2008. This cut virtually wipes out the program for the remainder of this fiscal year.

The Chamber understands the difficult fiscal challenges faced by the state and we applaud you for taking decisive action by implementing budget cuts and spending controls in order to respond to the estimated \$1.4 billion state budget shortfall. However, the Chamber believes that the Workforce Training Fund benefits both employers and their employees and should be maintained. It helps workers gain new skills, promotes productivity and innovation, and supports Massachusetts employers looking to compete in a rapidly changing global economy. In addition, it does not drain any other state revenue sources since it is completely funded by employers through a surcharge on their unemployment insurance contributions.

The New Bedford Area Chamber of Commerce respectfully requests that you reconsider your decision and reinstate the \$9 million for the employer funded Workforce Training Fund. In this difficult economy, it becomes even more imperative that the state supports measures to promote job training and investment in our local employers.

Thank you for your consideration on this important economic development issue.

Sincerely,

Roy M. Nascimento, IOM  
President & CEO