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CONTACT: Rob Davidson | 716-225-2423 | rob.davidson@mail.house.gov

Keeping Progress on Track: Kennedy & Poloncarz Announce \$1.795 Million to Support Relocation of Rail Yard at Renaissance Commerce Park

New Funding Builds Upon \$5 Million Provided by Governor Hochul For Project That Will Allow Further Development of Renaissance Commerce Park at Former Bethlehem Steel Site in Lackawanna

More Than \$130 Million in Private Investment Has Been Dedicated to the Site Since 2013; Additionally, New York State, Erie County, the ECIDA, City of Lackawanna and the Federal Government Have Invested Nearly \$40,000,000 to Create and Maintain Public Infrastructure

Relocation of Rail Yard Will Enable Future Extension of the Shoreline Trail, Opening Up New Public Access to the Site

LACKAWANNA, NY - Congressman Tim Kennedy (D-NY 26) and Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz were joined by Lackawanna Mayor Annette Iafallo and leadership from the Erie County Industrial Development Agency to announce \$1.795 million in funding secured by Kennedy during his previous tenure in the State Senate, with the support of Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins. This funding will enable the relocation of railroad facilities at Renaissance Commerce Park on the former site of Bethlehem Steel in the City of Lackawanna. The Buffalo & Erie County Industrial Land Development Corporation, the land development arm of the Erie County Industrial Development Agency, has entered into a purchase sale agreement to acquire 40 additional acres of the former steel manufacturing site, building upon the 200 acres that currently constitute Renaissance Commerce Park. However, a portion of the site is encumbered with existing South Buffalo Railway Companies rail yard facilities, making it impossible to derive economic benefit from the additional acreage. The funding secured by Kennedy, building upon \$5 million provided by Governor Hochul, will enable the relocation of the facilities to an agreed-upon site further back on the property that will facilitate new redevelopment opportunities while also preserving South Buffalo Railway Company's important operations.

“Renaissance Commerce Park is among the most important economic development projects in Western New York, bringing new businesses into Lackawanna, creating jobs, and building our tax base,” said **Representative Tim Kennedy**. “I was very proud to work with Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins during my time in the Senate to deliver these funds to enable Erie County to unlock another 40 acres of former industrial land for redevelopment. As our country looks to shore up our domestic supply chains, manufacturers and other employers are desperate to find shovel-ready sites like this. Under County Executive Poloncarz’s leadership, I have every confidence that we will continue to see growth and progress at Renaissance Commerce Park.”

“I am proud to have helped secure \$1.795 million in new funding for the relocation of the South Buffalo Railway Company Yard at Renaissance Commerce Park,” said **Senate Majority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins**. “As Senate Majority Leader I am committed to supporting projects that boost economic development and build a stronger foundation for prosperity in our communities. The relocation of the rail yard is a major step in attracting more investment, creating new jobs, and incentivizing sustained economic development in the City of Lackawanna. I want to thank Tim Kennedy for his tireless efforts in advocating for this funding and I look forward to continuing to work with him and our partners in government to support this project.”

“Erie County and our partners at the ECIDA/ILDC, the City of Lackawanna, and of course, the members of the Western New York delegation in the State legislature, have invested hundreds of millions of dollars to clean up and redevelop the industrial wasteland that was left by the closure of Bethlehem Steel,” said **Erie County Executive Mark C. Poloncarz**. “This additional \$1.795 million secured by Congressman Kennedy will continue these efforts, bringing more land online for remediation and redevelopment. We are seeing success right in front of us, with Sucro Sourcing, Welded Tube, TMP Technologies, two brand new Uniland buildings, and two public roads for the first time in this site’s history,” **Poloncarz continued**, “Erie County can compete with anywhere nationally and internationally, but it takes smart investments of this kind. We also need to pass the legislation introduced by then-Senator Kennedy and Assemblymember Rivera to extend these brownfield tax credits, which help combat inefficient sprawl and unlock the full potential of Renaissance Commerce Park.”

“The city of Lackawanna is grateful to Congressman Kennedy, Senate Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins and our WNY delegation in the state legislature for securing this additional funding to continue developing Renaissance Commerce Park, a transformational project that is fueling a rebirth of our local economy, tax base and employment opportunities,” said **City of Lackawanna Mayor Annette Iafallo**. “Lackawanna also strongly supports the passing of legislation extending the state’s brownfield tax credits, which are vital for attracting the sizable public and private partnership investments necessary to restore economic vibrancy to abandoned industrial sites like the former Bethlehem Steel Plant.”

“When Bethlehem Steel shut down, it took a long time for our local economy to get back on its feet. Decades later, the plant’s former site is once again contributing to the local economic landscape thanks to the millions of state and county dollars invested into site remediation. Renaissance Commerce Park is already a major success, but this new funding will help the site attract additional private investment that will bring more jobs and further expand the county’s tax base,” said **Senator Sean Ryan**.

Assemblymember Jon D. Rivera said, “Within the past few years and with the help of our Democratic leadership at the state and county, we’ve seen the growth of Renaissance Commerce Park in Lackawanna transform an area that was once a derelict Brownfield site lying vacant amongst the rubble of the former Bethlehem Steel. Now, the commerce park has opened up new possibilities in an ever-evolving city like Lackawanna and the regional economy around it, and with the recent funding secured by then-Senator Kennedy that will allow for the relocation of railroad facilities onsite, there are more opportunities than ever before. As a member of the State Senate, Congressman Kennedy was a strong voice for extending Brownfield Tax Cleanup credits at this site, via our legislation, S.9449/A.8011. Now that Senator Ryan is carrying the legislation, I trust that our counterparts in Albany understand the economic importance of this continuously developing site. I want to thank

Congressman Kennedy and Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz for their continued commitment to our region, and their ability to consistently steer our local economy in the right direction.”

“Relocating the rail yard is a critical step in the redevelopment of this site,” said **John Cappellino, President and CEO of the Erie County Industrial Development Agency (ECIDA)**, which through its land development corporation, has managed the redevelopment of the former Bethlehem Steel site since 2012. “Moving the railyard will allow us to begin Phase 2, which includes an additional 48 acres for development, expansion of the Shoreline Trail Bike Path south to Woodlawn Beach, a new trail head with parking and amenities and future public-access to passive park overlooking Lake Erie. Thanks to Congressman Kennedy and Empire State Development, we now have the resources not only to add 48 acres of developable land, but also to advance important public-access amenities on the site.”

“The Renaissance Commerce Park has been an essential driver of economic development in the City of Lackawanna and all of Western New York, and relocating the railroad track is an important next step in the continuing efforts of redeveloping the site of the former Bethlehem Steel to an economic engine for this century” said **Erie County Legislature Chairwoman and ILDC board member April N.M. Baskin**. “I want to thank Rep. Tim Kennedy, Majority Leader Andrea Stewarts-Cousin, and the entire Western New York delegation in the state legislature for securing \$1.795 million to begin this process. I would also like to advocate for legislation to extend these brownfield tax credits so sites like this can be turned into economic boosters like the Renaissance Commerce Park.”

Kennedy and his colleagues also emphasized the importance of passage of [S.9449/A.8011](#), legislation originally introduced by then-Senator Kennedy and now sponsored by Senator Sean Ryan and Assemblyman Jon Rivera. This legislation will help to ensure that brownfield tax credits at Renaissance Commerce Park can continue to be utilized. The legislation is necessary due to disruptions in the decontamination process, as well as due to delays caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The legislation is vital to the continued success of Renaissance Commerce Park’s development efforts.

“The creation of Renaissance Commerce Park from the remains of the Bethlehem Steel site has been a project more than a decade in the making,” said **Kennedy**. “This legislation will ensure that we continue that progress and allow manufacturers to utilize the Brownfield Tax Credits needed to develop this large and important site.”

In 2017 the Industrial Land Development Corporation, led by its Board Chair Erie County Executive Mark C. Poloncarz purchased the first 150 acres along Route 5 from owner Tecumseh Redevelopment, followed by an additional fifty acres on adjacent parcels. Improvements at the new site, now called Renaissance Commerce Park, include new water and sewer infrastructure, two new roadways, the Shoreline Trail bike path, and relocation of a railyard along Route 5.

Foam products manufacturer TMP Technologies opened its new facility at RCP in 2021, followed by Uniland Development’s two warehouse/distribution facilities and sugar refiner Sucro Sourcing. In early 2022, Erie County and ILDC began the process of acquiring an additional 40 acres from Tecumseh for Phase II of Renaissance Commerce Park, where the WYE railyard is currently located.

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