



## MICHIGAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

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January 30, 2008

The Honorable Michael A. Cox  
Attorney General  
Michigan Department of Attorney General  
P.O. Box 30212  
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Dear Attorney General Cox:

I am writing to bring to your attention a situation that is occurring as a result of Attorney General Opinion No. 7210 that you issued on December 27, 2007. In the opinion, you concluded that only a permanent resident is eligible to receive a driver's license in Michigan. Unfortunately, given the breadth of this conclusion, your opinion has resulted in Michigan driver's licenses being denied not only to illegal aliens as you intended, but to legal immigrants and to other persons legally present in the United States.

I and other Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) staff have been receiving frantic phone calls, e-mails, and letters from Michigan's international business community regarding this issue. Your opinion, issued with no advanced warning to the business community and with no opportunity for a hearing or public comment, has given the international business community the perception that Michigan is not open for business. For example, the government of Japan has formally expressed its concern that this issue may have a negative effect on the close and amicable relations between Japan and Michigan, particularly on the prospects of future investment.

I would like to share with you the magnitude of this problem as it relates to economic development in Michigan. According to the United States Bureau of Economic Analysis, in 2004, foreign companies invested over \$39 billion in Michigan. In 2007 alone, the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) assisted over 30 foreign companies with expansions or locations in Michigan, with new investments of over \$300 million and creating over 3,000 new jobs. Think of the impact on our economy if as a result of your opinion these companies moved to other states that allow for any international staff legally in the United States to obtain a driver's license. No amount of tax breaks, start up funds, or other incentives will "seal a deal" with a foreign company if their international employees cannot function and if they feel unwelcome in Michigan.

In 2006, there were over 373,000 people who were in Michigan on visas, including automotive executives, managers, engineers, educators, students, and others who were here for short- and long-term work assignments or for education. In order to effectively conduct business, these individuals need to be able to legally drive in Michigan, buy or lease a car, and obtain automobile insurance, just as in other states and countries.

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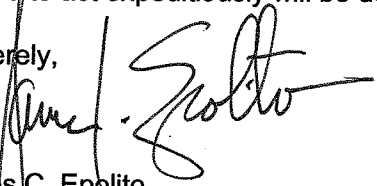
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Attorney General Michael A. Cox  
January 30, 2008  
Page Two

As a result, legislation is now required to address the problems resulting from your opinion and avoid timely and costly litigation. We realize there are many concerns in this general area that must eventually be dealt with, but we hope we can count on your active and vocal support to help move a responsible fix for this specific problem through the legislative process as quickly as possible. Failure to act expeditiously will be detrimental to Michigan's economic development efforts.

Sincerely,



James C. Epolito  
President and CEO

cc: Governor Jennifer M. Granholm  
Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land  
Members of the Michigan Legislature  
MEDC Executive Committee