



**State and Federal Government Affairs Proposal  
for  
Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority**

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**Ridge Policy Group**

**September 7, 2016**

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# RIDGE POLICY GROUP

## Executive Summary

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Thank you for the opportunity to submit a State and Federal government affairs representation proposal for the review of Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority (ECGRA). Our team has unmatched experience representing Pennsylvania organizations and interests, a comprehensive understanding of the many assets that exist in Erie and enjoys excellent relationships with key State and Federal policymakers. With more than three decades of government experience and a strong commitment to the continued economic growth of Northwestern Pennsylvania, the Ridge Policy Group is uniquely qualified to support your goals.

ECGRA's innovative approach to funding economic development, human services and humanities in the Greater Erie region should be recognized by government leaders and modeled by other gaming authorities. Our team is encouraged by ECGRA's proactive leadership and strategic vision. We are confident that the Ridge Policy Group can assist with furthering the goals of ECGRA by raising your profile, introducing the Authority to potential partners, identifying potential revenue sources and ultimately securing funds to bolster your economic impact.

The City of Erie has benefited from comprehensive strategic plans and economic assessments that provide direction for targeted local government investments. Erie boasts strong university resources and these assets should be leveraged to bolster the local economy. Through our work with the Ben Franklin Technology Partners at Penn State University Behrend Campus and Mercyhurst University, we are committed to the continued success of these institutions, as well as the greater Erie community at large. Our team understands the local government dynamics and has existing relationships with many of the economic development entities.

Understanding the overall goal to revitalize Erie, our team would identify and pursue State and Federal grant assistance responding to the various recovery components. Related to the need to revitalize neighborhoods and rehabilitate infrastructure, our team would pursue assistance from the Commonwealth Financing Authority (CFA) Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) and the United States Departments of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and Transportation (DOT). The CFA Building Pennsylvania Program provides loans to attract real estate investment, while the Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) through the Governor's Office provides direct grants for capital improvements. At the Federal level specifically, the Surface Transportation Program (STP), the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Program and the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program all provide opportunities for streetscape improvements, sidewalks and bicycle lanes and overall neighborhood revitalization.

The Pennsylvania State and Federal economic development agencies, the Department of Economic and Community Development (DCED) and Economic Development Administration (EDA) respectively, will also provide opportunities for ECGRA to pursue funding. In addition to traditional economic development grants that both entities provide, the EDA administers the Regional Innovation Strategies Program which dedicates funding to regional initiatives aimed at spurring the start up community. This initiative is an ideal opportunity for City's goal to create an ecosystem of innovation around the university assets. The State operates similar grant programs, such as the Pennsylvania First Program and Partnerships for Regional Economic Development Program, the First Industries Fund, and also offers special designation status (Keystone Innovation Zone and Keystone Innovation Network) and tax credit opportunities (Job Creation Tax Credit) that are relevant to this initiative.

In addition to the university assets, Erie enjoys a number of historical and cultural elements that should be cultivated to create a more robust year-round tourism industry. Our team would pursue historic preservation opportunities at the State and Federal level to assist the community with this endeavor. The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission oversees a number of funding opportunities for nonprofit organizations and local governments. In addition to the Commission, we would also seek cultural-related State grant opportunities through the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. At the Federal level we would pursue opportunities through the National Endowment for the Arts, National Endowment for the Humanities and Department of Interior.

A comprehensive government affairs strategy requires relationships with State and Federal legislators as well as Administration officials. These relationships can result in appointments to advisory councils and other high profile platforms to promote ECGRA's activities in Erie. ECGRA should be recognized for the forward-thinking activities that are occurring in Northwestern Pennsylvania and we are confident that through government marketing and socialization throughout our networks, the Ridge Policy Group could assist with enhancing your profile both in Pennsylvania and Washington D.C.

Finally, our team understands and respects the important role that local governments play across the Commonwealth. We are experienced working with City and County governments alike and enjoy relationships with various local government officials across the State of Pennsylvania. We would enjoy creating formal collaborations between the City of Erie and like governments to further the interests of both localities. Additionally, the Ridge Policy Group would utilize local government associations, like the Pennsylvania League of Cities and County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania to garner support for our efforts and determine potential partnerships.

The Ridge Policy Group affords partnering clients with connections and credibility vital to any government affairs strategy. Our firm's efforts in Pennsylvania and Washington D.C. raise our clients' profiles and issues of concern before prominent and appropriate decision-makers. We are confident that our relationships and government expertise coupled with our unmatched understanding of politics and assets located in Northwestern PA would result in considerable opportunities for ECGRA.

## Our History

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The Ridge Policy Group is a bipartisan, full service government affairs and issue management group with offices in both Washington, D.C. and Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Since 1982, when Tom Ridge was first elected to the United States Congress, through his years as Governor of Pennsylvania, to his historic service as the nation's first Homeland Security Director, he has worked closely with senior advisors Mark Holman and Mark Campbell. Holman and Campbell have developed unmatched experience at the state and federal levels, overseeing every aspect of government programs, policies, and budgets.

At the Ridge Policy Group, our team offers an exceptional and unique bipartisan understanding of how government works at every level. We have a proven track record of results, both as governmental agents and as senior level lobbyists. For our clients, this means success in navigating the complexities of federal, state, and local government while Governor Tom Ridge provides innovative strategic counsel. As a non-lobbying partner in our firm, the Governor is available for strategic use and public events when possible. We are happy to discuss specific accomplishments, including State and Federal legislative achievements and successful grant acquisition in verbal format.

Our firm carries the credibility and reputation of our nation's first Secretary of Homeland Security, Tom Ridge. We take this brand seriously and strive for professionalism and client satisfaction. The Partners of our firm are actively engaged with every client and ensure high quality products and results. Additionally, our team approach ensures that matters are handled expeditiously and appropriately. Projects are delegated to the most appropriate person of our

team to ensure that clients experience a knowledgeable and proactive partner for each initiative. Our primary concern is protecting our clients' interests by being proactive and advocating for policies that create an environment for their continued growth and success.

## **Agenda Setting**

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We would begin our partnership with the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority with an in-depth strategy session that builds on our knowledge of your current government affairs activities and educates our team about aspects of ECGRA that are pertinent to our work. Understanding current government relationships, partnerships and successes helps us to determine where to appropriately focus our advocacy efforts moving forward. During this initial meeting we will determine a timeline for upcoming actions and begin plans for execution. We would also assess your current legislative advocacy efforts, determine strengths and weaknesses and provide strategic advice related to where best to target resources and focus efforts.

Our team provides ongoing counsel to our clients dependent on the political and policy environments. While we offer advice based on our combined experiences, all decisions regarding agenda setting and execution are made by ECGRA and we commit to working to advance your priorities.

ECGRA would benefit from a coordinated and proactive approach to State and Federal government affairs matters. The team at the Ridge Policy Group would work to expand your opportunities within both the State and Federal policy arenas by raising your profile before key policymakers and legislators and determining branding and funding opportunities that may exist for ECGRA. We would monitor and react to proposed legislation that may impact ECGRA and would also work to ensure that relevant legislators look to ECGRA as a resource and partner.

## **Advocacy Efforts**

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Eager to apply our experience and capabilities to assist ECGRA's government affairs agenda, the Ridge Policy Group proposes the following general scope of work:

### **Strategic Consultation**

Based on our collective government and industry experiences, the Ridge Policy Group will assist with identifying a strategic path forward. This process will include assessment of all potential funding and branding opportunities and priority order in which each should be pursued. Analysis of Administration priorities and moving legislative vehicles will also factor into this effort.

### **Government Strategy**

The Ridge Policy Group will provide advice concerning strategic plans for communications with key decision-makers specific to the goals of ECGRA. We will work to create new relationships, strengthen existing efforts and advise where improvements may be possible. We will also provide political briefings that are relevant to ECGRA and our government affairs efforts.

The Ridge Policy Group will identify key government funding and marketing opportunities for ECGRA and craft strategies specific to each goal. We have identified the following State and Federal offices as example targets for these efforts:

## **STATE GOVERNMENT**

**Governor's Action Team**

**Governor's Office, Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program**

**Commonwealth Financing Authority, Building Pennsylvania Program**

**Department of Community and Economic Development, Keystone Innovation Network, Job Creation Tax Credit, Ben Franklin Technology Development Authority, Pennsylvania Capital Access Program, Pennsylvania First Program, Partnerships for Regional Economic Performance, First Industries Fund**

**Department of Transportation**

**Historical and Museum Commission**

**Team Pennsylvania**

**Northwestern Legislative Delegation**

**House and Senate Leadership**

**House and Senate Appropriations Committee**

**House and Senate Local Governments Committee**

**House Gaming Oversight Committee**

**House Tourism and Recreational Development Committee**

**Senate Community, Economic and Recreational Development Committee**

## **FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**

**Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration, Regional Innovation Strategies Program, Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Program**

**Department of Housing and Urban Development, Community Development Block Grant**

**Department of Interior, Preserve America Community Program, Cooperative Conservation Program**

**Department of Transportation, Surface Transportation Program, Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery Program**

**National Endowment for the Arts**

**National Endowment for the Humanities**

**Small Business Administration, Regional Innovation Clusters**

**Pennsylvania Congressional Delegation**

**House and Senate Appropriations Committee**

**House Energy and Commerce Committee**

**Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee**

**Legislative and Regulatory Monitoring**

The Ridge Policy Group will monitor and report on legislative and regulatory actions that may provide opportunities for ECGRA. Our team is constantly monitoring policy activities, including legislative Committee hearings/meetings and regulatory actions in Harrisburg and Washington D.C., to ensure that we are ready to act when appropriate opportunities arise.

**Direct Lobbying Services**

The Ridge Policy Group will provide and coordinate all direct lobbying services in conjunction with and on behalf of ECGRA related to our government affairs agenda. This includes formal and informal meetings, Congressional testimony, preparation and written correspondence.

**Coalition Building**

The network of the Ridge Policy Group is far-reaching. We have many private sector and trade association relationships that may present additional partnership, funding opportunities and awareness of the innovative engagements of ECGRA. In addition to broadening your network, we will represent you at coalition and stakeholder meetings in which you are currently involved.

**Networking Opportunities**

The Ridge Policy Group sponsors a number of social and networking events throughout the year that provide our clients with an opportunity to meet and interact with policy makers in an informal setting.

**Lobbying Disclosures**

The Ridge Policy Group will provide access to consultants to oversee the ECGRA's lobbying disclosure filings.

Our firm is dedicated to providing excellent customer service to our clients. Each government affairs strategy is developed depending on the specific needs and style of each client. We look forward to crafting a successful federal strategy and partnership with the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority.

# RIDGE POLICY GROUP

September 8, 2016

Perry N. Wood  
Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority  
Executive Director  
5240 Knowledge Parkway  
Erie, PA 16510

**Re: Engagement Letter for Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority**

Dear Mr. Wood:

The Ridge Policy Group, LLC ("RPG" or the "Group") is pleased that you are interested in our contracting with the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority (the "Client") regarding State and Federal government relations matters. This letter confirms the terms by which the Ridge Policy Group will provide government relations services to the Client with respect to lobbying on legislative and administration matters impacting the Client (the "Agreement").

## **BILLING MATTERS**

The monthly retainer schedule for our service is \$5,000.00 beginning on September 8, 2016 for a term of twelve (12) months with the understanding by the Group and the Client that at the conclusion of this Agreement, the parties may elect to renegotiate the terms of this Agreement. Both the Group and the Client shall have the right at any time to terminate services and representation upon thirty (30) days advance written notice. Such termination shall not, however, relieve the Client of the obligation to pay for services rendered, expenses and other charges made or incurred on behalf of the Client prior to the date of termination. If any portion of these services is interpreted to constitute lobbying services under Pennsylvania statutes, the Pennsylvania 6% sales tax on lobbying services will be included in the monthly statement. Monthly billings will also include any out-of-pocket expenses incurred in connection with lobbying efforts on behalf of the Client, such as long distance travel costs. Payment of \$5,000.00 for the first month's retainer is due immediately, with the next month's retainer due on or before October 8, 2016.

The Group also reserves the right to decline to continue to provide services to clients who do not pay timely. By signing this engagement agreement, the Client confirms its understanding of and agreement with the foregoing.

## **WAIVER OF CERTAIN CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

From time to time, we may be asked to represent someone whose interests may differ from the interests of the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority. The Client also understands and agrees that the Group may represent other businesses in the same industry as the Client in

government relations, lobbying and legislative/administrative executive activities. However, without your written approval, we will not accept an engagement that is adverse to the Client.

The Client is the Group's sole client with respect to this engagement. The Group will promote the interests of the Client with regard to government affairs matters. The Group does not have a client relationship with any individuals or entities that are affiliated with the Client unless the Group otherwise agrees in writing. For example, the Group's representation of the Client does not include representing its directors, officers, employees or affiliated entities.

#### LOBBYING DISCLOSURE

To the extent that the Group's representation of the Client requires that the Group register and report lobbying activities under applicable federal or state law, you may authorize us to prepare and file these registrations and reports with the appropriate government authorities and to pay for our preparation of such reports and related expenses, including filing fees. Should the Client decide to directly file such reports, the Group will provide the Client with a timely statement at the close of each reporting period under either the appropriate state or federal lobbying disclosure act to assist the Client in complying with their registration and reporting requirements.

#### PUBLIC INFORMATION

The Group sometimes identifies clients in various public communications including (but not limited to) press releases, the Ridge Policy Group website and brochures used to describe the Group and its capabilities. We ask that your signature to this letter also acknowledges your consent to including the Client's name in these communications.

We greatly appreciate your confidence in us, and look forward to our representation of the Erie County Gaming Revenue Authority. This Agreement and our retainer arrangement cover only government relations services, and no legal services are provided to the Client by the Ridge Policy Group.

Please acknowledge your understanding and agreement regarding the terms of our engagement as described in this letter by signing one of the enclosed copies of this letter in the space provided below and returning it to me with your initial retainer check.

Sincerely,

RIDGE POLICY GROUP



By: Mark Holman, Partner

Agreed and accepted this 3 day of October, 2016.

ERIE COUNTY GAMING REVENUE AUTHORITY

By: 

Title: Exec Dir.