

Businesses unhappy with New York budget

Nick Reisman, Jim Stinson • Staff writers •
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There is not much in the adopted state budget for businesses to be happy about.

Business groups said the \$136.5 billion budget, finalized last week and four months overdue, includes new fees and reduced tax credits that will result in continued stagnant job growth.

Businesses also complained about what hasn't been adopted: making permanent a program that reduces energy costs and any form of property tax relief.

"The budget is terrible for business, absolutely terrible," said Sandy Parker, CEO of the Rochester Business Alliance, noting that spending was increased by 7.5 percent.

Ken Pokalsky, director of government affairs for the New York State Business Council, fears that the \$1.5 billion in new taxes for 2010-11 will hasten the exodus of jobs out of the state. Those taxes include collecting sales tax on clothing under \$110.

"As every state is scrambling and trying to recover, this is really unprecedented state-level policy," he said. "We don't see other states taking these measures."

Rochester business leaders weren't happy that tax credits for businesses were cut in half for three years, even though the credits eventually are to be fully paid.

The Power for Jobs program, which provides energy rebates to businesses that create jobs, was extended for a year by the Legislature, but Gov. David Paterson has yet to sign the extension. Paterson wanted a long-term program with some changes, but legislators couldn't agree.

Businesses, meanwhile, had pushed to make the program permanent.

Mark Peterson, CEO of Greater Rochester Enterprise, said state officials are thinking about a new program to provide cheaper hydroelectricity to businesses. But, he said, "We ended up doing nothing."

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Your daughter insists on wearing her princess costume to the grocery store. Allow it or not?

YES, at least she's dressed!

NO, I have some rules!

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