



TESTIMONY: MILWAUKEE COUNTY MINIMUM WAGE ORDINANCE
December 16, 2013
Steve Baas, Vice President of Government Affairs
MMAC

On behalf of the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce (MMAC) I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on the wage ordinance you have before you today.

The MMAC represents nearly 1800 member businesses employing more than 300,000 workers throughout the metropolitan Milwaukee area. We are also a founding partner of the Milwaukee 7 regional economic development organization. As such, we are acutely aware of just how intense the competition for jobs and economic development nationwide and globally is.

It is in that context that we urge you to exercise great caution as you consider the ordinance before you. Passing an ordinance that will make Milwaukee County a more expensive place to do business will certainly have marketplace ramifications. We have seen foreshadowing of these ramifications already with the Wauwatosa Innovation Park project. Before putting an ordinance in place that would make the County a high-cost island for projects like these in the future, we would urge you to do a thorough analysis of the long-range implications of such an ordinance on the County's economy.

While we appreciate the fiscal analysis prepared by County Comptroller Manske, we are concerned that analysis deals primarily with direct impacts on the County and does not do a more dynamic analysis of the full scope of potential lost revenue due to a constriction of economic development activity. Comptroller Manske's analysis with its projections of millions in lost revenue is sobering enough on its own, but it does not attempt to project the full tax base implications of lost development opportunities. A full economic impact analysis of this ordinance will help ensure that whatever decision you make on this issue in the end can be made with the fullest possible understanding of both the direct and indirect impacts of this ordinance on the County's economy.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment on this issue. We appreciate the County's partnership in creating a growing regional economy and look forward to working together with you to ensure metropolitan Milwaukee remains a great place to live work and play.

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