



COUNTY OF DUTCHESS

MARCUS J. MOLINARO
COUNTY EXECUTIVE

MEMORANDUM

TO: Robert G. Rolison, County Legislature Chairman
All Legislators & Legislature Staff

FROM: Marcus J. Molinaro, County Executive

DATE: December 15, 2014

RE: 2015 Adopted Budget

Today, I sign and return the 2015 Adopted Budget and Capital Improvement Plan as amended by the County Legislature.

Over three short years, we have overcome a \$40 million budget gap, weathered a nearly 9 year national recession, which included a decrease of nearly 25% of Dutchess County's true value assessment, replenished our county's general fund balance, improved our bond rating and reasserted Dutchess County's fiscal security. By transforming County Government and establishing unprecedented partnerships with our local governments we consolidated government, reduced costs, improved efficiencies, and changed the very way government functions. By making government smaller, smarter and more effective we hold ourselves more accountable to taxpayers, set an example others across New York seek to emulate and are, indeed, moving Dutchess forward.

The 2015 Adopted Budget does not diminish critical county services, but it does expand shared service opportunities with municipalities, continues to consolidate County Government, and provides much needed tax relief to our residents. It makes targeted strategic investment in infrastructure, farming, tourism and small business development all with the goal of growing our economy and private sector jobs. With your bipartisan support and my signature, those who honestly and earnestly engaged in the budget development and review have provided the largest tax levy reduction in 14 years, cut county spending from the current modified budget, and enabled STAR property taxpayers to qualify for a state tax rebate check next October.

All of this is no small accomplishment considering state mandated costs, which already consume 70% of our budget, increased another \$2 million. While some wish to overlook this burden crowding out county services – we must not. Our citizens deserve relief from Albany's crushing mandates. We will work with our state legislative delegation, Democrat and

Republican, to fight for what relief we can secure. To overlook this 70/30 challenge would be an abandonment of our responsibility to Dutchess County taxpayers.

After nearly 50 town hall forums and countless hours speaking directly to residents, it is apparent that there will be no shortage of challenges in 2015. But, as our shared constituents remind me, the decisions we make – grounded in our decision making principles of focus, inclusion, logic, and fairness – are more respected when we work together.

On behalf of residents and taxpayers alike, thank you, Mr. Chairman for your hard work and leadership. Thank you to the Majority Caucus, in particular Majority Leader Angela Flesland and Budget Committee Chairman Dale Borchert, for your efforts to make the 2015 county budget a reality. And, thank you Legislators Gwen Johnson and April Farley for your support. I look forward to working with all of you in 2015 so that together we can address the challenges by engaging in the civil, constructive debate that results in better decisions and policy.

In the meantime, best wishes for a happy holiday season.