



Greater Ohio Policy Center

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Ohio Can Compete in the Next Economy

State Policy Must Build on Assets, Reform Governance, Align with Federal Agenda

Columbus, Ohio – After decades of job losses and industrial decline, Ohio has a chance to regain its footing in the emerging global economy, according to a new report authored and released today by the Greater Ohio Policy Center and the Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program at the Statehouse Atrium.

“Our goal is for the report’s recommendations to usher in a new era of prosperity in Ohio by outlining concrete policies that transform the way the state conducts business and open the way to innovative practices at the local level to take advantage of Ohio’s many assets,” said Lavea Brachman, Greater Ohio co-director, Brookings Non-Resident Senior Fellow, and a co-author of the report.

Brookings predicts that the next U.S. economy will have several defining characteristics. It will be export-oriented, lower-carbon, innovation fueled, and led by metropolitan areas. The report, *Restoring Prosperity: Transforming Ohio’s Communities for the Next Economy*, finds that Ohio has surprising strengths in each of these areas. For example, the value of the state’s exports rose every year over the last decade; the number of clean energy jobs grew from 1998 and 2007 even as the state lost jobs overall; and clean technology venture capital investments tripled between 2007 and 2008.

Most critically for Ohio, the next economy will be metropolitan led. Metropolitan regions, encompassing cities, suburbs, and rural areas, are the key functional units in the global economy today. Ohio’s 16 metropolitan regions are home to the driving assets that will power the state’s economy in the future.

Restoring Prosperity argues that the state needs to adopt a three-part agenda to capitalize on the elements of the next economy and the metropolitan assets that have withstood Ohio’s intense economic challenges. Specifically, Ohio must:

- Support innovation, human capital, infrastructure, and quality places in its metropolitan areas, because these are the assets that drive prosperity

- Catalyze governance reform and spur regional collaboration, both to save money and increase competitiveness
- Engage with and even lead the federal government, competing aggressively for new federal grants, projects, and programs, and helping shape a policy agenda for states making the transition from an economy that worked in the 1970s to one that is strong today and will remain strong in the future.

“These recommendations build on promising practices poised for implementation or already under way at the state and local levels, and provide a blueprint for avoiding further fiscal distress and reshaping Ohio’s economic landscape in communities across the state,” Brachman said.

The report provides 39 specific policy recommendations including:

- Maintain the successful Third Frontier program
- Pass a package of foreclosure prevention and corrective action legislation
- Cut the number of Ohio school districts by at least one-third
- Determine the true costs of Ohio’s proliferation of local governments
- Compete aggressively for federal investments in clean energy, industry cluster development, and advanced manufacturing.

The report recommendations are the product of over two and half years of research, analysis, and extensive stakeholder input from all sectors. “Ultimately, economic health will come from a robust and flexible private sector,” said Bruce Katz, Director of the Brookings Metropolitan Policy Program and a co-author of the report. “But if state leaders adopt the policies recommended here, and create a productive partnership with the federal government, they can lay the groundwork for private sector strength, fill critical holes that the private sector won’t, and create the conditions in which markets, places, and, most importantly, people can flourish.”

In addition to representatives from Greater Ohio and Brookings, U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown, Ohio Lt. Gov. Lee Fisher, and The Ohio State University President Gordon Gee shared comments about the importance of the report to Ohio. Ohio Supreme Court Chief Justice Tom Moyer led a panel discussion about report implementation and opportunities and challenges for the state and local areas.

Panelists included Ginny Barney, city manager of Upper Arlington, Ohio; Ohio Sen. John Carey, chair of the Senate Finance Committee; State Rep. Mike Foley, chair of the House Housing and Urban Revitalization Committee; Mike Morris, chairman, chief executive officer and president of American Electric Power; and Nan Whaley, Dayton City commissioner. Also attending today’s report release were approximately 200 state and elected officials, as well as education and business leaders from throughout the state.

The full report is available online at www.greaterohio.org.

About Greater Ohio Policy Center

Greater Ohio, the state’s “smart growth” organization, promotes – through research, public education and grassroots advocacy – public policy to grow Ohio’s economy and improve the state’s quality of life through intelligent land use. Toward this end, Greater Ohio advances policies and programs that revitalize urban and metropolitan areas, strengthen regional cooperation, and protect Ohio’s open space, natural resources and farmland. Based in Columbus, Greater Ohio is non-partisan, non-profit, and foundation-funded. For more information, please go to www.greaterohio.org.

About the Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings

Created in 1996, the Metropolitan Policy Program (MPP) provides decision makers with cutting edge research and policy ideas for improving the health and prosperity of metropolitan areas including their component cities, suburbs, and rural areas. To learn more visit: www.brookings.edu/metro.