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## Mullen mum on development councils

Posted on February 14, 2011 at 1:38 pm by Casey Seiler, Capitol bureau chief in Economic development, General

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Outgoing Empire State Development Corporation Dennis Mullen collected a round of compliments for his state service during his appearance Monday morning at the joint legislative hearing on economic development — despite the fact that he was unable to offer much in the way of details on the subject that almost everyone wanted to talk about: Gov. Andrew Cuomo's plan to create 10 regional councils that will serve as "one-stop" centers for all manner of development activity.

Mullen was appearing in place of Ken Adams, the former CEO of the state Business Council who was **nominated** by Cuomo last month but hasn't yet been confirmed by the Senate.

After reading his statement giving the broad outlines of the regional plan, Mullen responded to almost every question or suggestion about it with variations on "It's too early to say" and/or "I'll be sure to relay that message to the executive team." An oft-repeated phrase was "intellectual flexibility," which he promised would be guiding the formation and design of the plan.

In the well-attended hearing, several lawmakers expressed concerns about the new development structure: Sen. Betty Little said that the north country's projected region covered too much terrain, and Sen. Tim Kennedy suggested that lawmakers should have a voice on the councils, even if it's some sort of ex officio role.

Sen. John DeFrancisco, who was chairing the hearing — which ended up running four hours — asked Mullen to opine on what he would like to see from the regional councils, but the ESDC chair said it would be best if he kept his own, uh, counsel.

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### Casey Seiler, Capitol bureau chief

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Translation: "I don't want anyone to pay attention to the details as we use taxpayer money to subsidize private businesses while they keep the profits."

See: Garden Way/Troy Bilt.

#### Olaf Fubb

February 14, 2011, 3:20 PM

Like the Thomas E. Dewey Memorial Thruway, Clinton's Ditch, apparently, ESDC is also no longer needed. The

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