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**MICHIGAN METROS WELL POSITIONED FOR NEXT ECONOMY:
Federal and State Action Could Accelerate Growth**

DETROIT, Mich., February 23, 2012 – Business Leaders for Michigan (BLM), the state’s business roundtable, today released a strategy for accelerating the economic growth of Michigan’s cities and regions. The report, *Michigan’s Metropolitan and Urban Strategy*, was prepared by Public Sector Consultants and the Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program.

“This report reinforces the 2012 Michigan Turnaround Plan and the need to accelerate the growth of our cities and metro regions to become a Top Ten state for job, economic and personal income growth,” said Doug Rothwell, BLM President and CEO. “Michigan’s metro regions benchmark competitively to national peers on economic performance and assets. The report outlines steps the state and local communities can take to go from competitive to best in class in economic growth.”

Highlighting the inter-dependence of city, region and state economies the report recommends the following:

- Reorienting the state’s 21st Century Jobs Fund to increase investment in manufacturing-innovation infrastructure by increasing funding for programs that expand research partnerships between large manufacturers and universities, training manufacturing-oriented researchers and engineers, and better supporting small manufacturers to take advantage of new ideas and new technologies.
- Demanding changes in federal workforce laws to allow more flexibility to better align programs to meet actual job skill requirements.
- Helping highly educated immigrants gain Michigan professional certifications to increase exports and entrepreneurial activity. (from 1996-2007, nearly 16 percent of all new businesses created in Michigan were immigrant-founded)
- Leveraging distinct assets in urban and metro areas by supporting a small number of industry or innovation cluster growth strategies. (such as life sciences, advanced manufacturing and alternative energy)
- Leveraging innovation-generating anchor institutions in cities by designating 1-3 “urban innovation districts” that connect anchor institutions with infrastructure, housing and amenities.
- Continuing to help cities and metro areas with their efforts to “fix the basics” of providing services, financial management, business retention, elementary and secondary education.

Other recommendations can be found in the report.

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"Michigan had the second-strongest recovery in the nation, largely thanks to the power of its metropolitan areas in innovation, manufacturing and exports," said Bruce Katz, Brookings vice president and director of the Metropolitan Policy Program. "But more needs to be done. State leaders need to set a platform to support Michigan's metro area strengths. Manufacturing labs, support for immigrant talent, and innovation districts are key tools Michigan's metros can use to build a sustainable economy."

"This report reinforced what we've always known. Michigan is full of innovative thinkers, highly skilled workers, and a world-class manufacturing base that positions Michigan for a dynamic resurgence," said Julie Metty Bennett, vice president for Public Sector Consultants. "However, it will take bold leadership and a commitment to our cities to make Michigan not only the best place to live and do business in the Midwest, but in the world."

In their Michigan Turnaround Plan, updated last month, Business Leaders for Michigan identifies the need to accelerate the economic growth of Michigan's cities and metro areas as a key step in the state's turnaround. The urban strategy can be found at <http://www.businessleadersformichigan.com/research-reports/> and the Michigan Turnaround Plan can be found at www.michiganturnaroundplan.com.

About Business Leaders for Michigan:

Business Leaders for Michigan (www.BusinessLeadersforMichigan.com), the state's business roundtable, is dedicated to making Michigan a "Top Ten" state for job, economic and personal income growth. The organization is composed exclusively of the chairpersons, chief executives or most senior executives of Michigan's largest companies and universities, which provide over 320,000 jobs in Michigan, generate over \$1 Trillion in annual revenue and serve over 135,000 students. The organization's work is defined by the Michigan Turnaround Plan, a holistic, fact-based strategy to get Michigan's economy back on track. Visit www.michiganturnaroundplan.com for more information.

About the Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program:

The Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings 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, please visit: www.brookings.edu/metro. Follow us on Twitter at www.twitter.com/brookingsmetro.

About Public Sector Consultants:

Public Sector Consultants (PSC) is a dedicated research and management firm, with specialties in health care, education, energy and environmental policy. Michigan-based, PSC is committed to providing objective research and sound solutions to the public and private sector. To learn more visit: www.pscinc.com.

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