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**Testimony of Jim Villa, CARW President**  
**City of Milwaukee Common Council Finance & Personnel Committee**  
**March 20, 2009**

Chairman Murphy, Honorable Committee Members – my name is Jim Villa and I am the President of CAR-W, the Commercial Association of REALTORS® Wisconsin. CARW represents nearly 700 commercial REALTORS® and commercial real estate professionals and has registered me as a lobbyist with the City of Milwaukee on the matter currently being discussed. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today on the proposed Ordinance.

A consortium of commercial real estate and development associations has worked diligently with the sponsors, proponents, Mayor Barrett and his office because we believe passionately in the City of Milwaukee and absolutely agree with the mission of the MORE proposal. I want to personally applaud Alderman Hamilton for his leadership on this issue. The real estate and development communities are here today not to oppose our collective goal of putting more Milwaukeeans to work, but to caution you that if we truly want the results of our endeavors to match our rhetoric then we cannot, and should not engage in practices that will have adverse, and unintended consequence of actually making it harder for city residents to go to work.

Make no mistake about it; the cost to build a project in the City of Milwaukee will dramatically increase under this proposal. Any person that tells you otherwise is not only fooling themselves but gravely misinformed about the potential risks associated with development. Industry professionals understand that it is incumbent on them to honor the taxpayers' investment and the additional requirements and mandates in this proposal, while raising the cost of the development, is a reflection of that commitment. Including prevailing wage and 40% RPP, however, will push the added costs to many critical and catalytic projects past the point of feasibility.

We don't have to be the City that chases away developers, that punishes entrepreneurs, that discourages taking risks to build, to create, and to put people to work. The Common Council and the Mayor already have in their power through development agreements and other tools the ability to enforce stricter standards when the situation is appropriate and when an even greater return on the City's investment is warranted and justified.

There is no doubt we all share the common goal of growing Milwaukee, and a priority in this must be putting people to work. I want to again thank and applaud Alderman Hamilton, as well as his cosponsors, Alderman Wade, Alderman Kovac and Alderwoman Coggs for their leadership, time and patience throughout this discussion. Working together, and not at odds, and working smartly, we can and will put more people back to work in Milwaukee and build this City's economic base for future generations.

Thank you.