

CAT CEO Threatens To Leave Illinois In Letter To Gov.

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (AP) — The chief executive of Caterpillar wrote a letter to Illinois Gov. Patrick Quinn raising the possibility the heavy equipment company could move out of Illinois because of concerns that the direction the state is heading isn't favorable to business.

In a letter to Gov. Pat Quinn obtained Friday by The Pantagraph of Bloomington, Doug Oberhelman said officials in at least four states have approached Peoria-based Caterpillar about relocating since Illinois raised its income tax in January.

"I want to stay here. But as the leader of this business, I have to do what's right for Caterpillar when making decisions about where to invest," Oberhelman wrote. "The direction that this state is headed in is not favorable to business, and I'd like to work with you to change that."

Oberhelman wrote he has been called, cornered in meetings and wined and dined. He said he had never considered living anywhere else or the possibility of Caterpillar relocating.

"But I have to admit, the policymakers in Springfield seem to make it harder by the day," he wrote.

Quinn spokeswoman Brie Callahan said Friday the governor plans to discuss the letter with Oberhelman on April 5 when the two meet at a conference in Peoria.

"The governor welcomes frank and open exchanges between the business community and government, and we are always open to new ideas that can help our businesses grow, innovate and create jobs," Callahan told the Pantagraph.

Along with the letter to Quinn, Oberhelman sent correspondence the company has received from leaders of South Dakota and Nebraska.

"I stand ready to help convince you to relocate or expand in the fiscally conservative, low-tax Lone Star State," wrote Texas Gov. Rick Perry in a Jan. 24 letter.

Caterpillar spokesman Jim Dugan tells The Pantagraph the letter shows Quinn that Oberhelman wants to be involved in finding solutions that benefit the company, which employs 23,000 people in Illinois.

"I view it as an olive branch to offer our help," Dugan said.

CAT CEO Threatens To Leave Illinois In Letter To Gov.

Published on Industrial Maintenance & Plant Operation (<http://www.impomag.com>)

While Oberhelman didn't single out a specific problem with Illinois' policies, Dugan said the recent income tax increase was major factor triggering the note.

Republican leaders, who unsuccessfully fought Quinn on the tax hike, say the letter confirms why they opposed the increase.

"These are the kinds of letters we fear," said Patty Schuh, spokeswoman for Senate Minority Leader Christine Radogno, R-Lemont. "Even more worrisome are the hundreds of businesses being wooed that we don't know about."

Source URL (retrieved on 04/19/2015 - 3:30pm):

<http://www.impomag.com/news/2011/03/cat-ceo-threatens-leave-illinois-letter-gov>