

Pennsylvania Works! coalition praises House passage of Historic Preservation Bill

Senate urged to take action to move bill to governor's desk

Harrisburg, PA (June 24, 2009) – **Pennsylvania Works!**, a coalition of environmental, conservation, preservation, housing, and research groups, praised the Pennsylvania House of Representatives for its passage of HB 42, the Historic Preservation Incentive Program, sponsored by Representative Robert Freeman (D-136). The bill passed today by a vote of 193 – 2.

“This is a tremendous victory for Pennsylvania’s older towns and cities,” said Ed Boito, campaign director for Citizens for Pennsylvania’s Future (PennFuture), which is coordinating the **Pennsylvania Works!** Campaign. “Pennsylvania’s historical and cultural heritage - and tremendous stock of historic buildings - is a fundamental part of our sense of place, our economy, our quality of life, our future. Preserving our historic buildings is also a key strategy to spur economic recovery in our older communities.

“Years of disinvestment and neglect have taken a toll on many of the traditional town centers in the state,” said Boito. “Pennsylvania’s communities are filled with vacant and underutilized older buildings that can be rehabilitated and put into new use, providing housing, office and retail space, or municipal buildings. The bill passed today will reduce blight, increase property values and tax revenues, and add new jobs to downtown business districts. Historic homes and rehabilitated architecturally-significant buildings will then be able to contribute to strong neighborhoods and a sense of pride in the community.

“We urge the Pennsylvania Senate to take immediate action and pass the Historic Preservation Incentive Program,” continued Boito. “It’s not only good sense; it is good for the economy.”

The bill passed today provides:

- Grants of up to \$15,000 for exterior rehabilitation of historic residential buildings;
- State tax credits of up to \$500,000 for rehabilitation of historic commercial properties; and
- Priority given to properties located in Main Street and Elm Street areas, Enterprise Zones and Historic Districts.

The **Pennsylvania Works!** Campaign works to create public policy that puts Pennsylvanians to work and builds a resilient, robust and green economy for all. Founding partners of Pennsylvania Works! include Citizens for Pennsylvania’s Future (PennFuture), 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Planning Alliance, the Housing Alliance of Pennsylvania, Keystone Research Center, Local Initiatives Support Corporation, PennEnvironment, Pennsylvania Environmental Council, Preservation Pennsylvania, and Regional Housing Legal Services.

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