

Advocacy Alert!

Budget looks good for preservation issues. Action needed on Barn, Heritage Area and Tax Credit Legislation

Thanks to your hard work, over the past two weeks House and Senate Subcommittees have voted to support most of the budget priorities set forth by Preservation Maryland and preservation advocates throughout the state. Final budget figures include:

- \$30 million for commercial projects under the [Rehabilitation Tax Credit](#) program (the residential program remains a true tax credit and does not require a budget appropriation).
- \$3 million for the [Maryland Heritage Area Authority](#) to support the state's 13 Certified and Recognized Heritage Areas
- \$2.136 million for operational support for history museums through the [Museum Assistance Program](#)
- \$600,000 for [capital grant](#) funding for historic preservation projects
- \$458,000 for [non-capital grant](#) funding for historic preservation projects
- \$200,000 for [IMPART grants](#) to fund graduate level internships and assistantships for students in archaeology, museum studies and historic preservation.
- \$53,500 for support of the [Maryland Humanities Council](#).

The successful lobbying effort this legislative season has reaped great rewards, and we appreciate the efforts of all those who called, wrote or visited their delegations. But there are still three weeks to go, and we have a lot of work still to do.

TAKE ACTION! Tax Credit, Barn and Heritage Area Legislation

- **Heritage Tax Credit Bill ([Maryland Heritage Structure Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program: HB 314](#))**: repeals previous limitations to the Heritage Tax Credit Bill, including single jurisdiction limits, and proposes to increase the time allowed to complete commercial projects and extending the termination date of the program until 2012. To date, this bill has received little support from the House or Senate, indicating the need for increased pressure for the 2007 legislative season to extend the program beyond the current sunset date of June 30, 2008. This year, it is important to push for a spillover provision that would

allow money left over from outside Baltimore City to be used for projects that were not funded because of the 50% limitation for tax credit allotment to any one jurisdiction. Last year, \$400,000 was left unspent and 50 tax credit applications in Baltimore City were not funded. **The hearing for HB 314 has been scheduled by the House Ways and Means Committee for Wednesday, March 21 at 1:00pm.**

To contact the members of this committee, please click the link:

[House Ways and Means Committee](#)

- **Barn Bill ([Agriculture - Preservation of Historic Structures: HB 699](#)):** would establish a Maryland Advisory Committee on Historic Agricultural Structure Preservation and a Maryland Barn Preservation Fund. This non-lapsing fund, which would include \$300,000 from the General Fund per year, would make grants to preserve historic barns and agricultural structures throughout the state. This legislation is vital to aid in the coalition effort to preserve [Southern Maryland Tobacco Barns](#), which were placed on the [National Trust for Historic Preservation's 11-Most Endangered List](#) in 2004. **Please contact members of the House Environmental Matters Committee to ask them to give a favorable request to HB 699.** The bill must then go to the full house before approval before crossing to the Senate for consideration.

To contact the members of this committee, please click the link:

[House Environmental Matters Committee](#)

- **Heritage Area Bill ([HB 175](#)):** will allow the [Maryland Heritage Areas Authority](#) to continue to use funds transferred to the program from Program Open Space to be used to support the operating expenses of the MHAA. This will allow for the continuation of staff support at the Maryland Historical Trust to the Maryland Heritage Area Authority. The Bill has passed the House, and is pending approval by the Senate Finance Committee. **Please contact members of the Finance Committee to urge their support of HB175.**

To contact the members of this committee, please click the link:

[Senate Finance Committee](#)

Please contact your representatives or the chairs of these committees. It is critical that they hear from you this week.

Thanks for your support!

Tyler Gearhart
Executive Director