



Advocacy Alert

2010 Legislative Session Ends with Mixed Results

April 20, 2010

Monday, April 12, 2010 marked the end of the 2010 Session of the General Assembly. The 427th General Assembly Session dealt with many tough issues, none more complex than passing a budget amidst tough economic conditions. Lawmakers also had an eye to the upcoming elections and tabled some issues like restructuring teacher's pensions and examining the alcohol tax to next year. Below is a summary of the preservation agenda.

Legislation:

- **Sustainable Communities Act** (*renames the Maryland Heritage Structure Tax Credit*)
 - Although the Administration's proposal to return the commercial program to a true tax credit was not approved, the residential and commercial programs were given a four-year extension with a \$10 million appropriation for commercial projects in FY2011. The residential program will remain as a true tax credit. Both the residential and commercial programs were scheduled to sunset in July of this year.
 - The Act contains a provision to open up the credit to non-historic buildings in order to encourage growth in designated Main Street districts, Transit-Oriented Development zones and the areas under the Base Realignment and Closure Act. Non-historic commercial rehabilitations in these designated areas can receive up to 10% of the total tax credit allocation.
 - Historic residential and commercial properties are eligible for a 20% tax credit. If, however, a commercial project achieves LEED Gold certification or above, it is eligible for a 25% tax credit.
- **African-American Heritage Grant Program**
 - A new \$ 1 million Capital Grant program was created to support preservation of African-American historic sites. The program will be administered jointly by the Maryland Historical Trust and the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture.
 - Grant applications are being developed and be available through the Maryland Historical Trust in the near future.

On the budget, most programs fared well and received amounts close to level funding from the previous fiscal year, however, funding for the Maryland Historical Trust's Non-Capital Grant Program was eliminated.

Budget Items:

- **Main Street Maryland**
 - Community Legacy
 - FY2011 Budget Request - \$4.65 million (*including leftover from FY10 activity*)
 - Amount in Final Budget - \$4.25 million
 - Neighborhood BusinessWorks
 - FY2011 Budget Request - \$7.62 million (*including leftover from FY10 activity*)
 - Amount in Final Budget - \$3.1 million
- **Maryland Heritage Areas Authority**
 - FY2011 Budget Request - \$3 million
 - Amount in Final Budget - \$3 million
- **Maryland Historical Trust Grant Programs**
 - The Museum Assistance Grant Program
 - FY2011 Budget Request - \$203,259
 - Amount in Final Budget - \$200,000
 - The Non-Capital Grant Program
 - FY2011 Budget Request - \$227,999
 - Amount in Final Budget - \$0
- **Maryland Humanities Council**
 - FY2011 Budget Request - \$53,500
 - Amount in Final Budget - \$53,500

Thanks to all of you who supported this year's legislative and budget agendas through letters, e-mails and phone-calls. Important work can be done between now and the beginning of next year's General Assembly Session. We encourage you to cultivate the support of your representatives in the General Assembly by highlighting preservation projects in your community and stressing the importance of the above programs year round.

Thank you for your support!

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