



Advocacy Alert

2008 Legislative Session Ends with Mixed Results

April 17, 2009

Monday, April 13, 2009 marked the end of the 2009 Session of the General Assembly. Over the course of the Session, the preservation lobby has been busy, working to ensure that our interests were represented in these difficult economic times.

The 426th General Session was marked by tough decisions and controversy. The Legislature grappled with hot-button issues like the death penalty and illegal immigration all while trying to pass a balanced budget. The budget process was made harder in March after it was revealed that the state's revenues were down more than expected and legislators faced an additional \$500 million shortfall. In the end, a \$13.8 billion operating budget was passed on Monday.

Our greatest disappointment this year was the failure of HB309/SB258 to reauthorize and enhance the Maryland Heritage Structure Rehabilitation Tax Credit. Numerous amendments were made to the Bill in the House Ways and Means Committee before it was sent to the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee. In the end, the Budget and Taxation Committee was not able to pass the amended legislation late in the Session. The Tax Credit program will continue in its current form with an approved budget of only \$7.7 million for FY2010.

The following is a summary of the results of the year's preservation agenda:

Budget Items: *(click on links to connect to fact sheets or websites for more information)*

- **Heritage Tax Credit:**

Legislation Introduced: Governor O'Malley has proposed legislation to reestablish the Historic Tax Credit as a true credit and provide up to \$100 million in credits over a five year period.

Legislation Status: The amended HB309 died in the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee on the last day of the session

Governor's Proposed Budget: \$14.7 million to be included only if the new legislation did not pass

Received: \$7.7 million

- **Smart, Green and Growing – Local Government Planning – Planning Visions**
Legislation Introduced: This legislation expands and updates the “Planning Visions” the represent the pillars of Maryland land use policy to address the value of the preservation of historical and cultural resources.
Legislation Status: Passed by Senate Education Health and Environmental Affairs Committee on April 4, 2009
- **Main Street Maryland**
Budget Request: Level funding of \$7 million for Community Legacy and \$5 million for Neighborhood Business Works
Received: \$4.5 for Community Legacy and \$3.1 million for Neighborhood Business Works
- **Maryland Heritage Area:**
Budget Request: Level funding for Maryland Heritage Area Grant: \$3 million
Received: \$ 3 million
- **Maryland Higher Education Commission:**
Budget Request: Restore funding to IMPART (Institute for Museum, Preservation, and Archaeology Research and Training) at FY2008 levels: \$200,000 to continue support for fellowships and internships in museum, archaeology and preservation programs
Received: \$0
- **Maryland Historical Trust Grant Programs:**
Budget Request: Level funding for Museum Assistance Grant: \$1 million
Received: \$224,862 and \$250,000 for Women’s Heritage Museum
Budget Request: Level funding for Capital Grant program: \$700,000
Received: \$0
Budget Request: Increased funding for Non-Capital Grant: \$600,000
Received: \$282,138

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!

Tyler Gearhart
 Executive Director