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March 1, 2010

The Honorable Charles A. Murphy
Chairman, House Ways & Means Committee
State House Room 243
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chairman Murphy,

We are writing to ask for your support for SB 90, *An Act to Sustain Community Preservation*, which has 61 House sponsors (along with 22 in the Senate). With 142 communities now having adopted the Community Preservation Act (CPA), the majority (57%) of House members represents at least one CPA community. Representative Stephen Kulik is the lead House sponsor, and the bill is now before your Committee.

SB 90 recently received a favorable recommendation from the Joint Committee on Community Development and Small Business. At the bill's hearing this past September, the Committee received hundreds of supportive letters and e-mails, and heard overwhelmingly positive testimony with no opposition.

CPA is one of the most effective state-local partnerships ever created, resulting in an \$825 million investment over the past ten years in affordable housing, historic preservation, recreational facilities and open space in Massachusetts – a total of nearly 3,400 projects. Besides preserving the most iconic and unique features of Massachusetts' communities, CPA has had measurable economic and job benefits, as evidenced by the enclosed study on the economic benefits of the CPA. The program also supports our tourism industry by preserving our historic and natural resources, all without requiring any state budget expenditures.

During most of the past decade CPA truly was an equal partnership between the state and its municipalities. But last year, while communities invested \$80 million in CPA, the state's CPA trust fund match dropped to only \$25 million. This has proved discouraging to participating communities, as well as to other cities and towns considering adoption of CPA. While citizens continue to support the betterment of their communities with their CPA property tax surcharges, even in hard times, the gap between local receipts and the state match has widened to the extent that communities have much less incentive to participate.

While not requiring any appropriation from the state budget, passage of SB 90 would guarantee that participating communities receive an annual state match of 75% of local CPA collections, signaling the state's continued commitment to this smart growth program, and allowing communities to better plan for their community preservation investments.

www.communitypreservation.org

Furthermore, SB 90's passage would be a significant piece of good fiscal news for the Commonwealth's cities and towns in a strained economic environment. In addition to providing a more robust state funding match, SB 90 would also make it easier for urban and less wealthy communities to participate in the program.

We would be happy to provide you with more information on why this bill is a win-win for the state and its communities, and look forward to talking with you further about passing it into law. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Stuart Saginor, Executive Director
Community Preservation Coalition

Marc Draisen, Executive Director
Metropolitan Area Planning Council

Aaron Gornstein, Executive Director
Citizens Housing and Planning Association

Joe Kriesberg, President & CEO
Mass Association of Community Development
Corporations

Tom Callahan, Executive Director
Massachusetts Affordable Housing Alliance

Wendy Nicholas, Northeast Regional Director
The National Trust for Historic Preservation

Wendy L. Price, Team Leader, Historic
Preservation
Historic New England

Jim Igoe, President
Preservation Massachusetts

Jack Clarke, Director of Public Policy &
Government Relations
Mass Audubon

Cris Coffin, New England Director
American Farmland Trust

Geoffrey C. Beckwith, Executive Director
Mass Municipal Association

Wayne Klockner, State Director
The Nature Conservancy of Massachusetts

George Bachrach, President
Environmental League of Massachusetts

John Whalen, Jr., Executive Director
Massachusetts Recreation and Park Association

Bernie McHugh, Coordinator
Massachusetts Land Trust Coalition

Lora Wondolowski, Executive Director
Mass League of Environmental Voters

Whitney Hatch, Massachusetts Director
The Trust for Public Land

David Bryant, Director of Government Relations
The Trustees of Reservations

Thomas J. Connelly, Jr., Executive Director
National Association of Housing and
Redevelopment Officials (MassNAHRO)

Tom Keane, Executive Director
Boston Society of Architects

Andre Leroux, Executive Director
Mass Smart Growth Alliance

CC: Speaker Robert A. DeLeo
Representative Barbara A. L'Italien
Representative Stephen Kulik