

April 19, 2012

The Honorable Robert A. DeLeo
Speaker of the Massachusetts House of Representatives
The State House, Room 356
Boston, MA 02133

Re: Amendment #737 to House Bill 4100

Dear Speaker DeLeo,

We, the undersigned organizations, are writing in full, enthusiastic support of Amendment #737 to the House Ways and Means 2013 Budget (House Bill 4100), which was jointly filed last week by House Ways and Means Committee Vice Chairman Stephen Kulik and House Minority Leader Bradley Jones. The amendment currently has 69 House co-sponsors.

The amendment's language mirrors the text of House 765, *An Act to Sustain Community Preservation*, with one exception. The funding mechanism proposed in the amendment is an annual transfer of \$25 million from the state's end-of-year budget surplus into the CPA Trust Fund, rather than an increase in the registry of deeds recording fee. As proposed, \$25 million from the state's budget surplus would be added each year to the revenue from the existing CPA deeds recording fee, and would be distributed to CPA municipalities beginning with the Fall of 2013 trust fund payment.

HB 765, which garnered the support of 114 co-sponsors in the House and Senate, has already received a favorable recommendation from the Joint Committee on Community Development and Small Business. At the bill's hearing in April, 2011, the Committee received hundreds of supportive letters and e-mails, and heard overwhelmingly positive testimony with no opposition.

Passage of Amendment #737 will have immediate and positive benefits across the Commonwealth. The legislation will create jobs as communities use their CPA funds to build affordable housing, rehabilitate historic buildings and create recreational areas. In addition, passage of Amendment #737 would be a significant piece of good fiscal news for the Commonwealth's cities and towns in a strained economic environment, providing funding to create and rehabilitate municipal assets such as city and town halls, other significant historic buildings, parks, playgrounds, athletic fields and tourist attractions. Lastly, elements contained within the amendment are designed to help densely populated urban areas, providing benefits that will incentivize them to participate in CPA.

CPA is one of the most effective state-local partnerships ever created, resulting in a \$1 billion investment over the past ten years in affordable housing, historic preservation, recreational facilities and open space in Massachusetts – a total of over 5,000 projects. Besides preserving the most iconic and unique features of Massachusetts' communities, CPA has had measurable economic and job benefits. The program also provides significant support to the Commonwealth's tourism industry by preserving our historic and natural resources.

Passage of Amendment #737 would ensure that participating communities receive a higher annual distribution from the CPA trust fund, signaling the state's continued commitment to this smart growth program, and allowing communities to better plan for their community preservation investments. We thank you for your support of the Community Preservation Act and hope that this amendment will be included in the final House budget.

We will be happy to answer any questions you may have on why this amendment is a win-win for the Commonwealth's communities. We thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Stuart Saginor, Executive Director
Community Preservation Coalition

Wayne Klockner, State Director
The Nature Conservancy in Massachusetts

Marc Draisen, Executive Director
Metropolitan Area Planning Council

George Bachrach, President
Environmental League of Massachusetts

Linda Orel, Executive Director
Massachusetts Association of Conservation
Commissions

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

Brenda Clement, Executive Director
Citizens' Housing and Planning Association

Erik Balsbaugh, Acting Executive Director
Massachusetts League of Environmental
Voters

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

Kevin Essington, Massachusetts State Director
The Trust for Public Land

Tom Callahan, Executive Director
Massachusetts Affordable Housing Alliance

David Bryant, Director of Government
Relations
The Trustees of Reservations

Rebecca Harris, Boston Field Office
The National Trust for Historic Preservation

Eric White, Managing Director
Boston Society of Architects

Jess Phelps, Team Leader,
Historic Preservation
Historic New England

John Nunnari, Executive Director
AIA Massachusetts Chapter

Jim Igoe, President
Preservation Massachusetts

Andre Leroux, Executive Director
Massachusetts Smart Growth Alliance

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

Geoffrey C. Beckwith, Executive Director
Massachusetts Municipal Association

Cris Coffin, New England Director
American Farmland Trust