



**American
Alliance of
Museums**

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May 5, 2014

The Honorable Lloyd K. Smucker, Chair
The Honorable Matt Smith, Minority Chair
State Government Committee
Pennsylvania State Senate
Harrisburg, PA 17120
Via fax: 717-299-7798/717-772-4437

Re: Senate Bill No. 1070

Dear Chairman Smucker, Minority Chairman Smith, and members of the Committee,

On behalf of the American Alliance of Museums, the nation's largest museum association, I am writing to express my strong support for Senate Bill No. 1070, the Pennsylvania Museum Preservation Act, which will be considered by this committee during a May 7 hearing.

As you know, this bipartisan legislation, introduced by Senators Patrick Browne and Jay Costa, would provide \$9.5 million annually to fund a museum grant program that would officially authorize the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission to establish a transparent, qualitative and consistent process for allocating these funds.

I'm sure you are aware of the significant economic impact of museums. The recent report by the Pennsylvania Legislative Budget and Finance Committee established that tourism is responsible for injecting approximately \$33 billion annually into the Pennsylvania economy, and museums of all types—art, history, science, children's museums, zoos and historic sites, among others—play a significant role in spurring much of this tourism. An investment in Pennsylvania's museums is certainly worthwhile; the U.S. Conference of Mayors has recognized an Americans for the Arts study showing that governments that support the arts see an average return on investment of over \$7 in taxes for every \$1 that the government appropriates.

We are also pleased to see the adoption of national standards used as criteria for determining a museum's eligibility for these new funds. The American Alliance of Museums serves as the national accrediting body for museums, but also recognizes that not all museums will be able to achieve accreditation. We have therefore established additional programs by which museums can access and adopt national standards and best practices, and we are pleased to make all of these resources available online to all museums in Pennsylvania and across the country.

We are also pleased that the museum community in Pennsylvania has so fully embraced this legislation. We are proud to stand alongside the following organizations that have expressed their support for this bill: PA Museums (which represents 300 museums in Pennsylvania), the Adams County Historical Society, the Philadelphia History Museum at the Atwater Kent and the Johnstown Area Heritage Association.

We thank you for considering this bill and for recognizing the vital role that museums play in our society. The American Alliance of Museums fully endorses Senate Bill No. 1070.

Sincerely,


Ford W. Bell