



American Planning Association  
**Pennsylvania Chapter**

*Making Great Communities Happen*

**Re: Proposed FY 2010 State Budget**

Dear Sir or Madam:

On behalf of the Board and membership of the American Planning Association, Pennsylvania Chapter (APA/PA), I am writing to express our strong disagreement with the extensive and deep cutbacks proposed in the Fiscal Year 2010 State Budget (and amplified with the more recent \$500 million of additional cuts) for programs affecting counties and local governments. While we recognize that the current economic crisis facing both Pennsylvania and the nation demands extraordinary efforts and sacrifice, we also believe the proposed budget cutbacks in the programs highlighted below will work counter to broader efforts to strengthen the economy and well-being of all Pennsylvanians.

APA/PA represents nearly 3,000 professional and citizen planners throughout the Commonwealth who are engaged in planning and implementation activities involving land use, environment, historic preservation, transportation, infrastructure and related physical, fiscal and economic development activities. Our members lead and assist programs and tasks at state agencies, county and local governments, as well as plans and projects directly involving neighborhoods and citizens.

Specifically, we urge reconsideration of the proposed eliminations and deep budget cuts in the Department of Community and Economic Development's (DCED) program areas and activities. DCED's nearly 12 percent proposed reduction represents one of the largest departmental cuts in the entire budget. More specifically, the following programs, which are intended to support counties and local governments are singled out for more drastic reductions:

- Land Use Planning Assistance (which includes the Transit Revitalization Investment District program); nearly 73%
- New Communities (which includes the Main Street and Elm Street programs, as well as Enterprise Zones); more than 33%
- Housing and Redevelopment Assistance; nearly 12%

We believe these proposed reductions are inconsistent with the needs of the Commonwealth's counties and more than 2,600 local governments to plan for and respond to the demands of land use development activities, infrastructure needs and community development, including transit-oriented development that supports smart growth goals and local economic development projects in central business districts and industrial areas.

The LUPTAP program is not a handout to local government but a matching grant program that leverages local dollars to ensure communities make excellent short and long-term decisions and stimulate local economies. Moreover, without strong coordination between local government planning and county, region, and state planning, how will government investments and private investors know that their resources are well spent?

We also do not support the magnitude of the proposed cutbacks for the following Economic Development Programs:

- Community Action Team; 52%
- Customized Job Training; 50%

- Economic Advancement; more than 20%
- Community Conservation and Employment; more than 16%
- Community and Regional Development; nearly 16%
- Infrastructure Development; nearly 15%
- Infrastructure Facilities and Improvement Grants; more than 14%
- Housing and Redevelopment Assistance; nearly 12%
- Local Development Districts; 10%
- Small Business Development Centers; 10%
- Industrial Resource Centers; 10%

The proposed cuts in these programs seem inconsistent with the tremendous economic development needs of the Commonwealth, since they offer additional support to combat the current economic crisis and can help to stabilize local governments and business enterprises.

We hope that you will work with the Governor's Office and your colleagues in both Houses to consider additional revenue raising measures and budget adjustments to mitigate the amount and focus of the budget reductions summarized above. The communities and citizens of Pennsylvania need your help to restore and preserve these budgeted items that are essential to meet their needs.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer these comments on the proposed State Budget.

Sincerely,

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