

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 294

Session of
1983

INTRODUCED BY SWEET, HOFFEL, MICHLOVIC, O'DONNELL,
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LESCOVITZ, WOZNIAK, McINTYRE, AFFLERBACH, GRUITZA, BELFANTI,
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WAMBACH, KOSINSKI, ALDERETTE, DAWIDA, FISCHER, BLAUM,
MICOZZIE, EVANS, COWELL, STEIGHNER, CLARK, TIGUE, McHALE,
PERZEL AND CAPPABIANCA, MARCH 14, 1983

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS AND COMMERCE, MARCH 14, 1983

AN ACT

1 Creating the Distressed Communities Task Force; establishing its
2 powers and duties; and making an appropriation.

3 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
4 hereby enacts as follows:

5 Section 1. Short title.

6 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Distressed
7 Communities Task Force Act.

8 Section 2. Legislative findings and policy.

9 (a) Findings.--It is hereby found and declared as a matter
10 of legislative findings:

11 (1) There exists in communities throughout the
12 Commonwealth blighted areas which are inimical to the safety,
13 health, morals and welfare not only to the residents of that
14 area but also to all citizens of the Commonwealth.

15 (2) These blighted areas, singly or in combination,

1 decrease the value of private investments and threaten the
2 sources of public revenue.

3 (3) Because of the economic and social interdependence
4 of communities, the economic and industrial development of
5 municipalities and political subdivisions of the Commonwealth
6 is substantially impaired.

7 (4) There exists in the Commonwealth a condition of
8 substantial and persistent unemployment and underemployment
9 seriously aggravated by an unacceptably low level of economic
10 activity in such areas.

11 (5) These conditions have and will continue to result in
12 making such areas economic or social liabilities harmful to
13 the social and economic well-being of the entire communities
14 in which they exist, depreciating values therein, reducing
15 tax revenues and thereby depreciating further the general
16 community-wide values.

17 (6) These conditions cannot be dealt with effectively by
18 private enterprise under existing law without additional
19 assistance in that the development, redevelopment,
20 industrialization or reindustrialization of such areas
21 requires the stimulation of private investment therein.

22 (7) The Commonwealth's present mechanisms for the
23 stimulation of industrial development have proven, in and of
24 themselves, to be inadequate in alleviating such conditions.

25 (8) Lack of coordination, inflexibility and slow
26 responsiveness all characterize the Commonwealth's present
27 administrative mechanisms for aid to industrial and community
28 development.

29 (9) Severe economic conditions throughout the
30 Commonwealth necessitate not only programs providing for

1 loans, the attraction and infusion of capital and other
2 stimuli, but that the Commonwealth take steps to insure that
3 such programs are coordinated and focused so that the
4 Commonwealth may make a rapid and effective response.

5 (b) Policy.--It is declared to be the policy of the
6 Commonwealth to promote the health, safety and welfare of its
7 inhabitants by the creation of a task force to direct and
8 coordinate all of the Commonwealth's programs involving the
9 commercial development, redevelopment, industrialization or
10 reindustrialization of areas throughout the Commonwealth. This
11 task force shall be known as the Distressed Communities Task
12 Force. These purposes are hereby declared to be public purposes
13 for which public money may be spent.

14 Section 3. Distressed Communities Task Force established.

15 There is hereby created a task force to be known as the
16 Distressed Communities Task Force, or Task Force. The Task Force
17 is constituted a public instrumentality and its exercise of the
18 powers conferred by this act shall be deemed to be the
19 performance of an essential governmental function. The Task
20 Force shall be a part of the Executive Branch and shall consist
21 of three members, specifically the Secretary of Commerce, the
22 Secretary of Labor and Industry and the Secretary of Community
23 Affairs.

24 Section 4. Powers and duties.

25 (a) Officers.--Task Force members shall annually elect one
26 of themselves as chairman and another as vice-chairman and shall
27 designate a secretary-treasurer, who need not be a member of the
28 Task Force.

29 (b) Compensation.--Task Force members shall not receive any
30 compensation by virtue of their membership in this body but

1 shall be entitled to reimbursement from the Executive Branch for
2 any expenses incurred by them in the performance of any
3 functions as members of this body.

4 (c) Quorum.--Two of the members shall constitute a quorum
5 and two affirmative votes shall be necessary for the transaction
6 of business or the exercise of any power or function of the Task
7 Force.

8 (d) Executive director.--An executive director of the Task
9 Force shall be appointed and his salary be established by the
10 board of directors. However, should said executive director
11 already be an employee of the Commonwealth, said person shall
12 serve without a salary. The executive director shall be the
13 chief administrative and operational officer of the Task Force
14 and shall direct and supervise administrative affairs and the
15 general management of the Task Force. The executive director may
16 employ such other employees and consultants as shall be
17 designated by the board of directors, however, it is hereby
18 directed that existing personnel and existing resources of the
19 Commonwealth's Executive Branch and the General Assembly be
20 relied upon to the extent possible without provision for
21 additional salary. The executive director shall attend meetings
22 of the board of directors, shall cause copies to be made of all
23 minutes and other records and documents of the Task Force and
24 shall certify that such copies are true copies and all persons
25 dealing with the Task Force may rely upon such certification.

26 (e) Annual report.--The chairman of the Task Force shall
27 prepare within three months after the end of the fiscal year an
28 annual report of the Task Force's activities and submit copies
29 thereof to the Governor, Speaker of the House of Representatives
30 and President pro tempore of the Senate.

1 (f) Meetings.--The Task Force shall meet no less than once a
2 month.

3 (g) Powers.--The Task Force shall have the power to:

4 (1) Adopt bylaws for the regulation of its affairs and
5 the conduct of its business.

6 (2) Adopt an official seal.

7 (3) Enter into agreements and other transactions with
8 any Federal or State agency.

9 (4) Appear on its own behalf before boards, commissions,
10 departments or agencies of government at the municipal, State
11 or Federal levels.

12 (5) Provide and pay for such advisory services,
13 feasibility studies and technical assistance as may be
14 necessary or desirable to carry out the purposes of this act.

15 (6) Certify the eligibility of projects for assistance
16 by the Pennsylvania Community Development Finance
17 Corporation.

18 (7) Do any and all things necessary or convenient to
19 carry out its purposes and exercise the powers expressly
20 given and granted in this act.

21 Section 5. Mandates of Distressed Communities Task Force.

22 (a) General rule.--The Task Force shall, within 30 days from
23 the effective date of this act, devise a set of criteria for a
24 definition of "distressed community" in accordance with
25 statistical information gathered by the Task Force. This
26 criteria shall include, but not be limited to, substantial
27 conditions of unemployment, economic recession, declining local
28 tax base, curtailment of municipal services, widespread reliance
29 on public assistance and blight, as that term is used in the act
30 of May 24, 1945 (P.L.991, No.385), known as the Urban

1 Redevelopment Law, caused by severe economic dislocation
2 experienced or threatened to be experienced by plant closings or
3 the jeopardy posed by a community's reliance on a single
4 capital-intensive industry. The criteria may be modified by the
5 Task Force as circumstances warrant.

6 (b) Catalogue of programs.--The Task Force shall, within 30
7 days of the effective date of this act, catalogue all of the
8 economic development programs currently provided by Federal,
9 State and local governments, including industrial development
10 authority programs, and categorize them according to
11 municipality. In addition, the Task Force will review all
12 applicable regulations and requirements of these programs,
13 proposing changes where necessary to coordinate the programs
14 provided to industries and communities in this Commonwealth to
15 deliver rapid and streamlined assistance to them. Furthermore,
16 the Task Force shall devise a method to give quick review and
17 priority to any project of any economic development program,
18 including P.I.D.A., which has been certified by the Task Force.
19 The catalogue of economic development programs compiled by the
20 Task Force shall be reduced to a comprehensible narrative such
21 that any threatened community or jeopardized industry may
22 ascertain the total range of programs available, and then with
23 the aid of the Task Force, proceed to secure needed assistance.

24 (c) Interagency cooperation.--When appropriate, on an
25 emergency basis or otherwise, the Task Force shall coordinate
26 any effort of Commonwealth agencies or instrumentalities in
27 providing assistance for economic development to industries and
28 the communities in which they are located.

29 Section 6. Appropriation.

30 The sum of \$500,000, or as much thereof as may be necessary,

1 is hereby appropriated to the Distressed Communities Task Force,
2 for the fiscal year July 1, 1983 to June 30, 1984, to carry out
3 the provisions of this act and to specifically carry out the
4 provisions of section 4(g)(5).

5 Section 7. Conflict of law.

6 If the provisions of this act conflict with any other
7 statute, ordinance, rule or regulation, the provisions of this
8 act shall control.

9 Section 8. Effective date.

10 This act shall take effect immediately.