

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 117 Session of  
1995

INTRODUCED BY D. R. WRIGHT, GORDNER, HALUSKA, MILLER, PESCI,  
CIVERA, STEELMAN AND TRELLO, JANUARY 20, 1995

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON TOURISM AND RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT,  
JANUARY 20, 1995

AN ACT

1 Amending the act of June 30, 1987 (P.L.157, No.15), entitled "An  
2 act establishing the Rural Economic Development Program for  
3 rural Pennsylvania; imposing additional powers and duties on  
4 the Department of Commerce, the Department of Education and  
5 the State System of Higher Education; making appropriations;  
6 and making a repeal," further providing for rural tourism;  
7 and making an appropriation.

8 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
9 hereby enacts as follows:

10 Section 1. Section 304 of the act of June 30, 1987 (P.L.157,  
11 No.15), known as the Rural Economic Development Program Act, is  
12 amended to read:

13 Section 304. Rural tourism.

14 [(a) Department grants.--The Department of Commerce shall  
15 provide grants to Appalachian Local Development Districts, not  
16 to exceed \$30,000 per district, for the development of a  
17 regional tourism brochure and map designating the historic sites  
18 and tourist attractions within the region served by the  
19 district. This information shall be developed through  
20 cooperative efforts of existing tourism promotion and

1 development agencies within the area served by the district.

2 (b) Regional tourism programs.--Each local development  
3 district shall provide a regional tourism development program  
4 which will serve as an integral part of the economic development  
5 plan within the local development district.]

6 (a) Rural tourism promotion agency.--Agencies eligible to  
7 apply for assistance are limited to existing tourism promotion  
8 agencies recognized by the Department of Commerce which  
9 represent one or more rural counties, as defined by the latest  
10 United States Census figures.

11 (b) Department grants.--The Department of Commerce shall  
12 provide matching grants to rural tourism promotion agencies to  
13 develop regional tourism programs. These grants may be used for  
14 the following:

15 (1) Local administrative staff salaries.

16 (2) Local administrative expenses.

17 (3) Feasibility studies.

18 (4) Reports.

19 (5) Planning and design activities.

20 (6) Promotional activities.

21 (7) Promotional products.

22 (8) Interpretive activities and products.

23 (c) Grant criteria.--To receive a Department of Commerce  
24 matching grant, a rural tourism promotion agency shall  
25 demonstrate the following:

26 (1) Collaboration among local officials; business  
27 leaders; nonprofit organizations; operators of local hotels,  
28 motels and bed and breakfast facilities, and others deemed  
29 appropriate.

30 (2) Authenticity of the site, as opposed to

1 reconstructed or recreated sites. The Pennsylvania Historical  
2 and Museum Commission shall certify authenticity of  
3 historical sites which are eligible for promotion.

4 (3) Integration of the rural tourism program with  
5 overall county vision and planning.

6 (d) Technical assistance.--The Department of Commerce shall  
7 provide direct technical assistance and training in rural  
8 tourism promotion, especially in the subject of heritage  
9 tourism. At least one full-time staff person in the department  
10 shall be assigned to be available to this activity.

11 (e) Coordination with other Commonwealth agencies.--The  
12 Department of Commerce shall develop policy recommendations for  
13 distribution to other Commonwealth agencies. These  
14 recommendations shall set forth the Rural Tourism Promotion  
15 Program and shall describe how other Commonwealth agencies can  
16 enhance this program. Commonwealth agencies shall provide the  
17 Department of Commerce with proposals and plans for enhanced  
18 rural tourism opportunities which utilize the resources of the  
19 various Commonwealth agencies.

20 (f) Annual plan.--Rural tourism promotion agencies shall  
21 submit an annual plan to the Department of Commerce. The annual  
22 plan shall contain the sites and attractions which the local  
23 rural tourism promotion agencies plan to promote. The Department  
24 of Commerce shall certify those sites and attractions which are  
25 eligible for promotion under this act. If the Department of  
26 Commerce approves an annual plan, the rural tourism promotion  
27 agency which submitted the annual plan shall receive  
28 disbursements from the Department of Commerce to implement that  
29 plan.

30 Section 2. The sum of \$2,000,000, or as much thereof as may

1 be necessary, is hereby appropriated to the Department of  
2 Commerce for the fiscal year July 1, 1995, to June 30, 1996, to  
3 carry out the provisions of this act.

4 Section 3. This act shall take effect in 60 days.