

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 2520 Session of
1996

INTRODUCED BY HERMAN, GEIST, DIGIROLAMO, BROWN, SEMMEL, TULLI,
STERN, GAMBLE, SAYLOR, RAYMOND, NICKOL, SCHULER, CONTI,
McCALL, STAIRS, LYNCH, OLASZ AND DRUCE, MARCH 27, 1996

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,
MARCH 27, 1996

AN ACT

1 Requiring the Department of Commerce to maintain data regarding
2 research and development affecting the housing industry in
3 this Commonwealth; recognizing and supporting the
4 Pennsylvania Housing Research Center; and making an
5 appropriation.

6 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
7 hereby enacts as follows:

8 Section 1. Short title.

9 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Housing
10 Research Act.

11 Section 2. Legislative findings.

12 The General Assembly finds as follows:

13 (1) In July of 1988 the Housing Research Center was
14 established to provide training, research, technology
15 transfer, consulting and other services to this
16 Commonwealth's residential building industry and to ensure
17 the best technologically advanced and scientifically sound
18 building processes and a more knowledgeable and quality-

1 oriented home-building industry. To reflect the commitment of
2 the center to provide such services to this Commonwealth and
3 its residents, the name of the center was changed to the
4 Pennsylvania Housing Research Center (PHRC). The PHRC is
5 devoted exclusively to research aimed at improving the
6 quality of housing and the infrastructure needed to support
7 such housing. To date, this commitment has been strengthened
8 through partnerships with the home-building industry, the
9 Pennsylvania Electric Association, the Pennsylvania Energy
10 Office and the member firms of the Mid-Atlantic Building
11 Systems Council.

12 (2) Home building is a major economic force within this
13 Commonwealth, providing tens of thousands of jobs and
14 generating millions of dollars in tax revenues. To ensure
15 such economic contributions remain a strong and viable part
16 of this Commonwealth's economy and to ensure this
17 Commonwealth's residents of continuing employment
18 opportunities, the PHRC provides valuable services and advice
19 to State, national and international aspects of the housing
20 industry and is expanding into newly opening markets in
21 second and third world countries.

22 (3) The PHRC has gained national recognition for its
23 contributions to the education of young engineers, the
24 training of builders and the establishment and implementation
25 of outstanding research and development for housing consumers
26 and the home-building industry. It studies demographic
27 changes, technological developments, and economic and social
28 trends. The PHRC serves as the focal point of informational
29 exchange through conferences, training courses and research
30 publications.

1 (4) To continue to effectively provide for this
2 Commonwealth's housing demands and the need for out-of-State
3 expansion of the housing industry, this Commonwealth needs
4 to:

5 (i) Support expansion of housing industry research
6 and development activities in this Commonwealth and
7 expansion of out-of-State and international export
8 opportunities to develop a competitive edge over other
9 states' expansion in those areas.

10 (ii) Develop and improve the product--a house, its
11 component parts and materials, and the employees who
12 provide these--to provide a more affordable, better
13 quality and technologically advanced product to
14 homebuyers and homeowners.

15 (iii) Improve housing industry productivity.

16 (5) The PHRC conducts research projects that have been
17 identified, developed and approved in concert with this
18 Commonwealth's building community of builders, private
19 companies and utilities.

20 Section 3. Definitions.

21 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
22 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
23 context clearly indicates otherwise:

24 "Department." The Department of Commerce of the
25 Commonwealth.

26 "PHRC." The Pennsylvania Housing Research Center, originally
27 the Housing Research Center, a center which gathers and
28 disseminates information, conducts research and development
29 projects, and makes other academically based contributions to
30 the housing industry of this Commonwealth.

1 Section 4. Recognition by department.

2 The department shall recognize the essential role PHRC
3 occupies in the growth of this Commonwealth's economy. The
4 department shall, in cooperation with PHRC, use the fruits of
5 PHRC's efforts to further meet the goals of the department.

6 Section 5. Information sharing.

7 The department and PHRC shall share any information which is
8 acquired by either and which affects the housing industry's role
9 in the economic growth of this Commonwealth. The goal of
10 information sharing shall be to ensure that this Commonwealth
11 develops and maintains global leadership status in the housing
12 industry.

13 Section 6. Data.

14 A copy of any data relevant to the provisions of this act and
15 acquired by either the department or PHRC shall be maintained by
16 the department.

17 Section 7. Annual report.

18 The department shall report annually to the appropriate
19 committee in the Senate and in the House of Representatives
20 regarding both economic and technological advancements made
21 during the immediately preceding year by this Commonwealth's
22 housing industry.

23 Section 8. Appropriation.

24 The sum of \$250,000, or as much thereof as shall be
25 necessary, is hereby appropriated to the Department of Commerce
26 to support PHRC in its endeavors to stimulate the economic
27 growth of this Commonwealth through its housing industry
28 projects and programs.

29 Section 9. Effective date.

30 This act shall take effect in 60 days or July 1, 1996,

1 whichever occurs sooner.