
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 954 Session of
2015

INTRODUCED BY WARD, WOZNIAK, TOMLINSON, ARGALL, RAFFERTY, YAW,
BAKER, YUDICHAK, HUTCHINSON, MENSCH AND SCARNATI,
JULY 15, 2015

REFERRED TO ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES AND ENERGY, JULY 15, 2015

AN ACT

1 Establishing a Heritage Areas Program to identify, protect,
2 enhance and promote the historic, recreational, natural,
3 cultural and scenic resources of this Commonwealth and to
4 stimulate community revitalization and economic development
5 through regional heritage conservation, recreation, tourism
6 and partnerships; and repealing provisions of The Fiscal Code
7 relating to heritage areas.

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

10 Section 1. Short title.

11 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Heritage
12 Areas Program Act.

13 Section 2. Declaration of policy.

14 The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

15 (1) The act of June 28, 1995 (P.L.89, No.18), known as
16 the Conservation and Natural Resources Act, created the
17 Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and
18 empowered the department to administer State heritage
19 conservation programs, such as the Pennsylvania Heritage
20 Parks Program.

1 (2) The Pennsylvania Heritage Parks Program consists of
2 heritage areas, which are multicounty regions located in this
3 Commonwealth and designated by gubernatorial action that
4 promotes an appreciation of the history and heritage of the
5 regions.

6 (3) Since 1989, heritage areas assist communities in
7 developing, restoring, preserving and conserving nationally,
8 State and locally significant historic, cultural, natural and
9 recreational resources through capital and programmatic
10 investments.

11 (4) Heritage areas have successfully demonstrated the
12 ability to create public, private and nonprofit investment
13 partnerships leveraging significant investments for every
14 dollar of Commonwealth funds.

15 (5) Heritage areas are a key catalyst in regions of this
16 Commonwealth for economic growth and community development
17 strategies and investments resulting in tourism promotion,
18 small business development and the creation of jobs.

19 (6) The Commonwealth's program has long been recognized,
20 studied and replicated by other states and the National Park
21 Service as a model for successful heritage and community
22 conservation and development.

23 (7) Due to the success of the program, a targeted effort
24 should be made to promote this Commonwealth's heritage areas
25 by providing dedicated funding.

26 Section 3. Definitions.

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

30 "Department." The Department of Conservation and Natural

1 Resources of the Commonwealth.

2 "Heritage areas." Commonwealth-designated regions, managed
3 by nonprofit organizations or governmental entities, which
4 conserve nationally and State significant landscapes and
5 develop, protect, interpret and promote their historic,
6 cultural, natural and recreational resources to stimulate
7 economic and community development.

8 "Program." The Heritage Areas Program.

9 "Secretary." The Secretary of Conservation and Natural
10 Resources of the Commonwealth.

11 Section 4. Heritage Areas Program.

12 (a) Establishment.--The Heritage Areas Program is
13 established within the department to identify, protect, develop,
14 enhance and promote the historic, recreational, natural,
15 cultural and scenic resources of this Commonwealth and to
16 stimulate community revitalization and economic development
17 through regional heritage conservation, recreation, tourism and
18 partnerships.

19 (b) Administration.--The department shall adopt program
20 goals, guidelines and policies for the implementation and
21 administration of the program. The department shall consult with
22 the heritage areas on an annual basis to discuss program goals,
23 guidelines and policies.

24 (c) Funding.--The department shall, under subsection (f),
25 allocate funds appropriated to the department to the program for
26 the following purposes:

27 (1) Management, administration, operation and marketing
28 of heritage areas.

29 (2) Planning, implementation, technical assistance and
30 educational projects and programs related to heritage areas.

1 (3) Development, construction, rehabilitation, repair,
2 acquisition, preservation and enhancement of lands, buildings
3 and other structures related to heritage areas.

4 (4) Protection, documentation, interpretation and
5 promotion of the cultural, natural, scenic, recreational and
6 historic resources of heritage areas.

7 (5) Establishment of partnerships and coalitions of
8 governmental and nongovernmental agencies and organizations
9 to assist heritage areas with the implementation of
10 management action plans.

11 (6) Any other activities deemed appropriate by the
12 department.

13 (d) Use.--A heritage area may use the funding allocated by
14 the department for the program to provide a grant to another
15 entity and organization, including a county, municipality,
16 authority, nonprofit organization, other authorized
17 organization, private sector firm and business, if the purpose
18 of the grant meets the requirements of subsection (c).

19 (e) Eligibility.--In addition to any other funding provided
20 to a heritage area, a heritage area shall be eligible to apply
21 for a grant and loan program administered by the department or
22 other Federal or State agency or entity.

23 (f) Amount.--

24 (1) The department shall distribute funds to the program
25 based on established program goals, guidelines and policies.

26 (2) The department shall allocate all funds appropriated
27 annually by the General Assembly for the program and each
28 State-designated heritage area shall receive a minimum amount
29 established by the program goals, guidelines and policies.

30 (g) Administrative use.--The department may use no more than

1 5% of the funding appropriated annually for the program for
2 administrative purposes, including the development of a
3 strategic plan or other appropriate initiative related to the
4 administration of the program.

5 Section 5. Repeal and continuation.

6 (a) Repeal.--Repeals are as follows:

7 (1) The General Assembly declares that the repeal under
8 paragraph (2) is necessary to effectuate this act.

9 (2) Article XVI-J of the act of April 9, 1929 (P.L.343,
10 No.176), known as The Fiscal Code, is repealed.

11 (b) Continuation.--This act is a continuation of Article
12 XVI-J of The Fiscal Code. Except as otherwise provided in this
13 act, all activities initiated under Article XVI-J of The Fiscal
14 Code shall continue and remain in full force and effect and may
15 be completed under this act. Orders, regulations, rules and
16 decisions which were made under Article XVI-J of The Fiscal Code
17 and which are in effect on the effective date of subsection (a)
18 (2) shall remain in full force and effect until revoked, vacated
19 or modified under this act. Contracts, obligations and
20 collective bargaining agreements entered into under Article XVI-
21 J of The Fiscal Code are not affected nor impaired by the repeal
22 of Article XVI-J of The Fiscal Code.

23 Section 6. Effective date.

24 This act shall take effect immediately.