



March 6, 2012

The Honorable Jerry A. Stern
Chairman, House Tourism & Recreational Development Committee
315A Main Capitol Building
PO Box 202080
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2080

Dear Chairman Stern:

The Pennsylvania Coalition of Independent Museums (PCIM) would like to voice its support for HB 2056, establishing the Pennsylvania Tourism Commission. The PCIM would advocate for the inclusion of a representative from the museum or historical organization community as a voting member of the Commission. Museums play a vital role in Pennsylvania's tourism industry.

Boasting a rich and diverse museum community with over 1,200 institutions, Pennsylvania attracts one hundred million tourists each year. Employing an estimated 12,500 Pennsylvanians, our museums, zoos, and historic sites have become an integral part of our Commonwealth's economic development and a key to the growth of Pennsylvania's second largest industry, Tourism. Pennsylvania's resources for heritage and cultural tourism range from hallowed battlefields to ornate art museums, from odd places like The Stoogeum (A Three Stooges Museum) to science centers at the cutting edge of human progress like The Franklin Institute.

According to several sources, over ten million people visit Pennsylvania's museums each year, and according to 2011 survey data from the Pennsylvania Federation of Museums and Historical Organizations, the number of visitors may be as high as thirty million. The national museum association, AAM, has described that, nationwide, museum visitation exceeds attendance at sports events. Some of these visitors are tourists from outside the state, and some of them are Pennsylvanians learning about their home. Over ninety percent of Pennsylvanians responded they had visited a historic site in a Penn State Poll from 2008. Museums work in partnerships with schools, tourism offices, businesses, and each other on a daily basis to serve more and more people each year.

Again, we respectfully request that you add a representative from the museum or historical organization community as a voting member of the Pennsylvania Tourism Commission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Richard Burkert". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Richard" being more prominent than the last name "Burkert".

Richard Burkert
Chair, Pennsylvania Coalition of Independent Museums