

## Weekly Legislative Update for State Historic Preservation Offices

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### 1) TAX EXTENDERS PACKAGE REJECTED BY HOUSE

On Monday, September 29, the House of Representatives rejected the Senate's proposal to extend a number of incentive programs, including those that have helped owners of historic properties in the Gulf recover from Hurricane Katrina. The Senate bill would have increased the Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit in the Midwest and Texas to help owners of historic properties in these states recover from recent disasters. Incentives for these states track with the incentive boost for Gulf Coast communities approved after the late summer hurricanes of 2005. The latter will sunset at the end of this year without an extension. In the Gulf Opportunity Zone, the 20% tax credit has been increased to 26%. The 10% credit for non-historic properties put into service before 1936 has been increased to 13% within this designated area.

Disagreements about offsets for incentives – known as “pay-go” – have stymied progress on the bill legislators consider a “must pass.”

The impasse provoked outrage in both chambers. House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D-MD) told Congressional Quarterly he has “no intention” of bringing the House back to D.C. to consider taxes after the elections. Senator Max Baucus (D-MT), Chair of the Senate Finance Committee (tax), was quoted as saying he doesn't know what to do. If the House does not pass the carefully crafted Senate bill, the bill will not pass this year. There is no time for another bill to volley between the chambers at this point in the Congress.

### 2) APPROPRIATIONS DECISIONS PUT OFF UNTIL MARCH 6

On September 24, Congress approved an omnibus and continuing resolution package that would extend existing federal program funding levels to March 6 of next year. This bill, H.R.2638, includes Department of Interior programs and the Historic Preservation Fund.

### 3) PRESERVE AMERICA GRANTS ANNOUNCED

On September 30, the President's Advisory Council on Historic Preservation announced the 44 recipients of the latest round of Preserve America grants. Projects in 24 states received 4.3 million from the federal grant program. The application period of 2009 grants opens on October 1.

In 2006, 2007 and in the first round in 2008, 12.7 million in Preserve America grants has been awarded to 183 projects nationwide. Grants are distributed to designed Preserve America communities. Since the program began in 2003, nearly 600 communities have been designated.

For a full list of grant recipients, visit the Preserve America website at:

<http://www.preserveamerica.gov/92908release.pdf>