

NATIONAL PRESERVATION ORGANIZATIONS SHARE GOALS FOR 2009

On Wednesday, October 29, national-level preservation organizations and federal agencies met to discuss opportunities in the 111th Congress. The National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers, Preservation Action, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions, the President's Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the National Park Service were in attendance. The brainstorming session was hosted by Preservation Maryland in their Baltimore offices.

The organizations and agencies met to share common legislative agendas, and to consider how prospective legislative items tie in with the next Congress's primary issues. Participants considered how Congress's energy-conserving and renewal energy-seeking goals and related legislation might provide vehicles for improvements to historic preservation policies. These improvements might include increased funding for core federal programs and increased incentives for historic property owners, including those of historic and older homes.

The group agreed on common agenda items including: increased funding for the federal preservation program (Historic Preservation Fund-supported programs including State Historic Preservation Offices, Tribal Historic Preservation Offices, Save America's Treasures and Preserve America); incentives for historic property owners (including tax incentives and grants) to rehabilitate and increase energy efficiency; legislation that would improve disaster preparedness, response and recovery via a vis historic resources; and legislation that would support job training for those engaged in protection, maintenance and rehabilitation of historic buildings. A "green jobs" bill is anticipated in the next Congress. This could substantially support training for preservation specialists.

The group also agreed that federally-funded infrastructural improvements in older rural and historic communities is also a priority.

The discussion included consideration of educational and media pieces that would complement a successful advocacy effort.

The following day, in the National Trust's corporate offices, related associations shared their legislative agendas with national preservation groups. Smart Growth America discussed its ongoing focus on vacant buildings legislation and infrastructural programs tying together transportation with sustainability. The North East Midwest Institute, a think-tank associated with the North East Midwest Coalition (a caucus), talked about their planning for the reauthorization of brownfields programs with a sustainability twist. Representative Michael Turner (R-OH), Republican chair of the Congressional Historic Preservation Caucus and a member of the Northeast Midwest Caucus has been considering a brownfields tax credit. The American Institute of Architects, the American Planning Association, the National Housing and Rehabilitation Association and a group of progressive developers contributed to the discussion.

The group agreed to work in concert in the next Congress.