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FEDERAL UPDATE

House Passes Rehab Tax Credit Amendments as Part of Housing Bill

The House passed a major housing bill (H.R. 3221) on Thursday that incorporates a number of other housing proposals relating to the subprime housing fallout (H.R. 5820) as well as the Housing Assistance Act (H.R. 5720), which contains three of rehab tax credit amendment provisions supported by the National Trust and its preservation partners. The White House released a Statement of Administration Policy (SAP) on the overall bill, including its opposition to elements of H.R. 5720, as part of its veto strategy to defeat the housing bill. Fortunately, the SAP did not mention rehab tax credit provisions as a source of opposition. The House sent the housing bill to the Senate on Friday, where its prospects are somewhat murky because of considerable opposition to elements of the bill that reform Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, the government-sponsored housing agencies.

The three amendments to the federal rehab tax credit approved by the House include **leaseback for not-for-profits, Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT) relief for rehab projects twinned with the low-income housing credit, and including historic rehab under State Qualified Allocation Plans (QAP) criteria for affordable housing.** For a complete breakout of the amendments, see the previous edition of Weekly Bulletin at http://www.preservationnation.org/resources/newsletters/public-policy-weekly-bulletin/PPWB_05-02-08_FINAL_web.pdf.

The Senate is expected to devote consideration attention to the housing package next week. Stay tuned for breaking developments!

House Committee Approves Parks Centennial Bill

The House Natural Resources Committee approved HR 3094, a bill to authorize new mandatory funding for national parks, but lawmakers are still trying to reach agreement on how to offset the added spending. The bill would create a new fund for special "signature projects" at national parks as a supplement to annual appropriations and implement the administration's the National Parks Centennial Initiative, in celebration of the 100th anniversary of the parks system in 2016. Funding would come through the annual appropriations process and would give priority to projects that receive matching funding from private donations.

However, the Committee approved a substitute amendment by Rep. Raul Grijalva (D-AZ) recognizing that the new funding source would not provide enough revenue to support \$100 million a year in mandatory spending over 10 years, as specified in the original bill. Instead, the Grijalva substitute would fund the program at \$30 million a year. Grijalva described the language as a "placeholder" and said that lawmakers would continue to negotiate where the offsets should come from to reach the bill's original target spending level.

[Farm Bill Details
on Historic
Preservation to
be Determined as
White House
Issues Veto
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The National Trust supports the efforts to increase funding for the Parks System centennial and especially for maintenance and upkeep of historic and cultural resources and sites in the parks.

Farm Bill Conference Concludes But Faces White House Veto

On Thursday, May 8th, House and Senate conferees announced an official agreement on the Farm Bill. The conference report will be edited and finalized by legislative staff over the weekend and should be available early next week. The National Trust has worked closely with Agriculture Committee staff to ensure historic preservation language is included in the final measure, but still has not verified if all of the preservation provisions have been included in the final conference report. The conference report is scheduled to be considered on the House and Senate floors on Wednesday, May 14th. President Bush continues to have concerns with funding in the measure and plans to veto it.