



November 27, 2007

Dear Representative,

As incoming President/CEO of 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania, I am writing to ask you to support House Bill 904. HB904 is being sponsored by State Representatives Robert Freeman and Bernie O'Neill. This legislation allows municipalities to implement a temporary moratorium on new development by enacting an ordinance that would temporarily suspend development while the municipality revises or enacts a comprehensive plan, subdivision and land development ordinance, or a zoning ordinance.

HB904 provides Pennsylvania's municipalities and their residents with the opportunity to create or make changes to their comprehensive plan, subdivision and land development ordinance, or zoning ordinance without interference from outside development proposals. This legislation gives municipalities the option to implement a temporary development moratorium, which prohibits applications for new development efforts (with some exceptions) for a certain period of time. The moratorium would allow municipalities to take a proactive approach to smart planning as opposed to the reactive approach of "putting out fires" and attempting to tackle unsustainable development proposals.

As you may know, 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania works to promote policies and practices that encourage smart growth planning and development. We believe that HB904 will prove to be an essential tool for municipalities and their residents in smart growth planning. It will help to guarantee that future development efforts are consistent with the land use plans that local citizens and elected officials have envisioned for their community.

Along with the ability to create or revise the new or altered land use plan, HB 904 will also require governing bodies of municipalities to hold a public hearing to discuss new or altered proposals. This allows residents of a municipality to become involved in the planning process and includes their input to ensure that land use plans are consistent with the community's needs and wants.

The Municipalities Planning Code was established in 1968 to provide residents of a municipality with the opportunity to become more involved in the planning process within their community. This legislation however, did not foresee the rapid overdevelopment that is now occurring in Pennsylvania. For this reason, it is important to update The Municipalities Planning Code through HB904 in order to cope with the overdevelopment issues currently facing the Commonwealth--as well as those that may occur in the future.

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Thank you in advance for your consideration. As always, do not hesitate to contact me with any question you may have regarding 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania and issues on smart growth. As part of our organizational mission we work to promote laws, regulations and practices that tie investment and infrastructure decisions to sound land use policies. HB 904 will be an effective tool in helping communities throughout the Commonwealth plan for sustainable growth. Your support for this important legislation will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Judith L. Schwank". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, flowing initial "J".

Judith L. Schwank