

Department of Conservation and Recreation  
Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**Stewardship Council**

December 7, 2018

Senator Mark Montigny  
Chairman, Senate Committee on Rules  
State House, Room 312-C  
Boston, MA 02133

**Re: An Act Relative to the Curatorship Program, S. 1655**

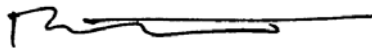
Dear Chairman Montigny:

Senators Tarr and Lovely have requested an amended Senate Bill 1655, *An Act Relative to the Curator Program*, be reported as soon as possible so it can be passed in informal session. The amended version reverses the original language of S. 1655, which prohibits the assessment of local property taxes on DCR properties in the Historic Curatorship program and instead makes it a local option. The DCR Stewardship Council opposes the Tarr/Lovely amendment and opposes any consideration of this amended legislation in the informal session should it be reported out by the Senate Committee on Rules.

All properties enrolled in DCR's Historic Curatorship program directly benefit the public by enhancing the aesthetics of our peerless state parks, preserving their historic character, and invite public engagement by virtue of being open to the public at least two times each year. Moreover, by encouraging curators to fix-up and occupy formerly vacant and deteriorating buildings, the program relieves the burden on local communities to protect against fire and persistent vandalism. In exchange for an extended lease (20-30 years), participants may apply the costs they invest against the cost of their lease but forgo any equity or interest in the property when it reverts back to DCR at lease-end.

Senator Tarr and Senator Lovely's amended version of S. 1655, though well-meaning, may significantly jeopardize DCR's nationally significant program. Local property taxes should NOT be assessed on DCR properties. The Stewardship Council urges legislators to oppose the Tarr/Lovely amended legislation. We look forward to working towards an alternative that protects our Generous Historic curators in the next legislative session.

Sincerely,



Whitney Hatch, Chair  
DCR Stewardship Council

Copies:  
Senator Bruce E. Tarr  
Senator Joan B. Lovely  
Senate and House Members  
Secretary Matthew Beaton  
Commissioner Leo Roy  
DCR Stewardship Council

*Stewardship Council*

**Whitney Hatch, Chair**

*Elisa K. Campbell*

*Heather A. Clish*

*Michele Hanss*

*Melissa Harper*

*David C. Murphy*

*Vivian Ortiz*

*Alvin Reynolds, Esq.*

*Katherine A. Sharry*

*Dennis Smith*

*Nathaniel Walton*

251 Causeway Street  
Suite 600  
Boston, MA 02114-2119  
617-626-1250  
[www.mass.gov/dcr](http://www.mass.gov/dcr)