

**Dewitt Peart**  
**President, Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce**  
**Senate Finance Committee Testimony**  
**November 8, 2013**

I am De Peart, president of the Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce, and I appreciate the opportunity today to testify on the Waterfront Development Tax Credit.

The Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce is an affiliate of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development. Its other affiliate members – the Pennsylvania Economy League of Greater Pittsburgh and the Pittsburgh Regional Alliance – work in collaboration with public and private sector partners to stimulate economic growth and enhance the quality of life in southwestern Pennsylvania.

Our members, who employ tens of thousands of residents in Western Pennsylvania and across the entire Commonwealth, believe that thriving communities are essential for a prosperous state and a healthy business environment. With many of our region’s municipalities located on our Commonwealth’s waterfronts, there is an abundance of opportunity to increase waterfront development in our region – which will undoubtedly lead to increased economic activity and increased quality of life – two of our overall organizational principles.

Therefore, I am here today to offer testimony in support of SB 968 – the Waterfront Development Tax Credit – which would encourage private investment in waterfront property and spur economic development, environmental improvements and public recreational enhancements.

Our region’s waterfront areas offer opportunities for economic development and public recreation which contribute to the livelihood of municipalities and surrounding areas, as well as to the quality of life of residents and visitors. However, these areas often require significant investment to re-develop due to barriers including abandoned industrial uses and contamination. Despite the desire to enhance waterfront areas, access to sufficient funding has remained an ongoing challenge.

This tax credit would work to provide funds for waterfront development projects by creating a tax credit that would be available to individuals or businesses that contribute to nonprofit waterfront improvement organizations.

Some of the eligible uses would be for streets, public rights-of-way and utility structures; waterfront parks, gardens and open spaces; promotion of erosion control, storm water management, aquatic habitat and other environmental changes that promote economic development; water transportation facilities for public use; and amenities for infrastructure and recreational projects.

As part of the effort to ensure that all communities in southwestern Pennsylvania share in this era of economic prosperity, our organization has been working to help revitalize our struggling neighborhoods and municipalities. I believe that the establishment of a waterfront development tax credit could assist many communities in need, enhancing their waterfront area and ultimately increasing economic development and quality of life where it's needed the most.

Again, I would urge the committee to support this tax credit.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and I would welcome any questions you might have.