

## Speaker Robert A. DeLeo's Remarks at the Kuehn Community Preservation Awards on January 14, 2014 at the Great Hall of the Massachusetts State House

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Thank you Vice-Chairman Kulik. And thank you to the Community Preservation Coalition and Stuart Saginor for having me here today.

We have many proud traditions here in Massachusetts: A rich history of civic involvement and community engagement. Beautiful and bountiful natural resources from Boston to the Berkshires.

And wherever you go in this state, you have the opportunity to stand amid historical greatness. Above all though, we are distinguished and guided by our industrious and innovative spirit.

To me, the Community Preservation Act compliments each of these distinctive characteristics.

The CPA draws from the state's strengths - both past *and* present – and in doing so, it gives us a vehicle to turn challenging issues, troubled neighborhoods and untapped assets into economic drivers. And that's the legislation is wholly transformative for cities and towns across the state.

I see the CPA a stimulant for job creation. Since becoming Speaker my focus has been on creating jobs and growing our economy. I've had amazing partners in this regard – Representative Kulik and the CPC among them.

I recognized then, in 2009, the need to generate creative solutions to bring jobs to Massachusetts that would benefit diverse industries and provide positions for citizens of all skill levels.

Projects funded by the CPA help employ everyone from artisans to members of the building trade. They bolster industries like tourism, clean energy and the nonprofit sector. The initiatives boost real estate markets and attract families, businesses and investors to the any given area.

Since 2001, 155 communities have adopted CPA legislation. That's almost half of the state's municipalities. And we have seen even more success and enthusiasm over the past year and a half.

I think all of us here today are encouraged by the increased participation, particularly from urban areas like Salem, Somerville and Fall River.

I'm proud to say that the CPA has either created or supported more than 7,300 affordable housing units.

And with last session's affordable housing legislation we are well on our way to growing our economy by addressing the most basic needs of our citizens. I'm extremely pleased our efforts to improve affordable housing are being extended and amplified through recent bills and legislation like the CPA. In this year's budget the Legislature's enhanced our commitment to the CPA's vision by providing an additional \$25 million.

I use the word vision because I believe the CPA is guided by a deep connection and appreciation of what Massachusetts can and will be in the future. And that is why it's been so effective.

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The \$25 million brings the trust back to a funding level where the state can match municipal grants 50-50.

Today we honor this year's Kuehn Award recipients. Bob Kuehn, a founder of the Community Preservation Coalition, was known for his ability to find common ground among diverse constituencies.

The CPA awards communities with many invaluable assets – affordable housing, parks and open spaces, museums and the protection of historic resources. In the end though, I believe the act provides common ground, places where citizens can come together and better our neighborhoods.

So thank you all for your work in advancing that cause. You're dedication and enthusiasm is invaluable.