

**TARAH TOOHL, Member
116th Legislative District**

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House of Representatives
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Harrisburg

Deputy Majority Whip

Children and Youth Committee, Secretary
Health Committee
Judiciary Committee
Subcommittee on Crime & Corrections
Local Government Committee

Welfare Reform Policy Development Team
Property Tax Policy Development Team

Children's Trust Fund Board

Interstate Compact for Juveniles
Pennsylvania State Council

East Central Caucus

Coal Caucus

Manufacturing Caucus

April 7, 2016

Chairman Adam Harris and Chairman W. Curtis Thomas
House Commerce Committee
Chairman Scott A. Petri and Chairman Thomas R. Caltagirone
House Urban Affairs Committee

Dear Chairmen and Members of the House Commerce and Urban Affairs Committees,

Thank you for holding a hearing on the City Revitalization and Improvement Zone (CRIZ) Program. The CRIZ Program can be a powerful tool to drive revitalization in our Commonwealth's cities and towns. The hearing is an important step in the process of continuous review and refinement of the state program to ensure that it is both effective for the participating communities and cost-effective for taxpayers.

The hearing happens at a critical time in the development of the program. Since its creation in 2013, three communities have had the opportunity to utilize this program, and I look forward to expanding that roster to include other communities that can benefit.

That is why I introduced House Bill 1508, which would expand the applicant pool to include third class cities with populations greater than 25,000, as of the most recent Federal decennial census. Currently, the cities with populations below 30,000 are not eligible for the program. In practical terms, this would expand the pool of eligible cities to include Williamsport (pop. 29,381), Easton (pop. 26,800), Lebanon (pop. 25,477) and Hazleton (pop. 25,340). My legislative district includes Hazleton, and legislators from each of the other three cities have joined the bill as co-sponsors.

This legislative session has seen a number of bills introduced that would expand which communities may participate in the CRIZ Program. These are all different and each deserves consideration. However, the fact that so many communities are interested in the program speaks to the potential that the CRIZ program has as a tool for economic development. I hope that the hearing can be used to develop further ideas for improvement of the program, both for participating communities and the taxpayers.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tarah Toohil".

Tarah Toohil
116th Legislative District
State Representative