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Memorandum

A. 1261 (Bronson)

S. 1947 (Ramos)

The Preservation League of New York State is New York State's statewide historic preservation nonprofit. **We write in opposition of Bills A. 1261 and S. 1947 relating to the requirements set forth in this bill regarding paying a prevailing wage.**

The Preservation League of New York State invests in people and projects that champion the essential role of preservation in community revitalization, sustainable economic growth and the protection of our historic buildings and landscapes. We lead advocacy, economic development and education programs across the state and partner with local preservation organizations throughout New York.

This bill, as written, would impede community development, revitalization, and endanger historic buildings and landscapes. Specifically, projects utilizing Environmental Protection Fund grants and New York State Historic Tax Credits would be negatively affected, as this legislation would significantly increase the cost of completing such projects. This will lead to a dramatic reduction in the historic preservation projects that revitalize our communities and stimulate our economy.

Further, the non-profit exemption threshold in § 2(B) have a threshold that only applies to the very smallest nonprofits receiving funding but would be debilitating for small to midsize non-profits. A more reasonable threshold could be projects receiving public funds less than one million dollars with a nonprofit budget of under ten million dollars. This will allow the churches, synagogues, historical societies, historic theatres, and museums that make our communities livable the opportunity to restore and rehabilitate the community-defining buildings that house them.

Additionally, we seek an exemption for those projects being done with the assistance of NYS Historic Tax Credits. We have heard from many preservation-minded developers that this bill will likely kill their projects. Already these projects are in census-tract qualified communities, contributing to economic development and community stabilization. This will allow investment to continue in those communities that need it most.

The Preservation League appreciates the important public policy initiative that all laborers receive a prevailing wage when public funds are used. This bill, however, sweeps in projects that already struggle to raise funds and often include significant donations and volunteer efforts. We ask the legislature to delay passage of this bill and allow time for additional thoughtful and inclusive conversation about the bill's public policy objectives, including how to mitigate unintended negative consequences for projects that define and support our communities.