



ESSEX NATIONAL
HERITAGE AREA

PRESS ALERT ----- FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE ----- PRESS ALERT

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**ESSEX HERITAGE URGES COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION TO SAVE
AMERICA'S HERITAGE**
Announces Group Photo Opportunity and Advocacy Effort

April 2, 2010 (Salem, MA) . . . The Essex National Heritage Commission is asking for community support to send an important message to Congress. The message . . . "Now is not the time to cut back on programs that not only save America's heritage but save and create America's jobs!"

Last month, heritage groups nationwide learned that the Obama Administration's FY 2011 federal budget is slated to make devastating funding cuts in several crucial preservation programs, such as National Heritage Areas, Save America's Treasures, and Preserve America. "These critical historic preservation programs matters now more than ever -- not only because they protect our national heritage but because they serves as an economic development engine and job creator in the hundreds of communities we serve," said Essex Heritage Executive Director Annie C. Harris.

In addition to creating preservation jobs, heritage sites sustain the important tourism sector. For example, in 2007 tourism within the Essex National Heritage Area drew 2.7 Million visitors alone, contributing to \$15.1 Billion in direct sales and \$943.3 Million in State and local spending across the state.

"We're asking residents and our partner organizations to act now, and join us in sending a message to our Congressional delegation, asking them to support restoration of preservation funding as the House and Senate work on their respective budget bills," said Ms. Harris. "The sad truth is too many people think of National Heritage Areas and other historic preservation programs as a nice thing to support or invest in if there is some 'extra' money to spend. However, the fact is that preservation is a proven economic development and jobs

creation tool that has the added benefit of fueling the travel and tourism sector, one of the nation's largest service employers," Ms. Harris continued.

As a demonstration of its commitment to this effort, the Essex National Heritage Commission will participate in the National Trust's initiative to raise awareness about proposed funding cuts by scheduling a public photo day. Essex Heritage will rally staff and other supporters for a **Group Photo on Thursday, April 8th at 11:30am in front of the *Friendship* of Salem, docked at historic Derby Wharf within the Salem Maritime National Historic Site.** Participants will hold a sign that says "This Treasure Matters." The photo will be sent to the Congressional delegation with a simple message - restore funding to federal preservation programs.

Essex Heritage invites the public and all partner organizations to capitalize on this opportunity to connect our Members of Congress with their constituents on such an important local issue. Contact Essex Heritage at (978) 740-0444 or visit www.essexheritage.org for additional Photo Day and advocacy effort information.

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About the Essex National Heritage Area and Essex Heritage

Designated by the US Congress in recognition of the important role that this region played in American history and its significant heritage sites still remaining, the Essex National Heritage Area is comprised of the 34 communities of Essex County, MA. Essex Heritage is a non profit agency that manages the Heritage Area, and works in collaboration with the National Park Service to promote public/private partnerships, and develop programs that enhance, preserve and encourage regional awareness of the Area's unique historic, cultural and natural resources. For more information, visit Essex Heritage at www.essexheritage.org or call (978) 740-0444.