

Neighborhood Quality Task Force

“Our neighborhoods are only as strong as our commitment to our community.”

Civic Leagues

Fellow Virginian Voters,

Admiral's Landing

Bishop's Green

Brighton/Prentis Park

Cavalier Manor

Cedar Point

Churchland

Cradock

Green Lakes

Grove Park

Highland Biltmore

Hunter's Point

Kingman Heights

Lake Shores

Long Point

Olde Towne

Olde Towne South

Oregon Acres

Park Manor

Park View

Port Norfolk

Portsmouth Acres

Shea Terrace

Simonsdale

Swimming Point

Truxton

West Park View

Westhaven

Wilson – Ward

Wise Beach

Our legislators need to hear that you are tired of carrying the tax burden caused by derelict properties. Please join us in contacting your legislators to voice *your* support of a bill vital to protecting the value of your real estate--House Bill 1671.

HB1671 (SB1094 in the Senate) is legislation written to equip our localities to prevent the spread of blight. Research has proven that crime rates are twice as high on blocks with one or more derelict property compared to blocks with occupied/maintained properties. Recent studies have shown that 3 out of 5 firefighter injuries occur while battling fires in vacant structures. National statistics also show that maintained properties located beside a derelict property lose an average of \$7,500 of their market value.

HB1671 (SB1094) will provide tools municipalities can use to keep the properties impacted by the current economic crisis from becoming derelict properties. This legislation will enable local officials to motivate owners to maintain their vacant properties in the following ways:

- Pro-active, cost-effective monitoring: Rather than relying on owners to comply with the current costly, cumbersome vacant property registration program, municipalities will notify owners if their property is classified as derelict and request a timely response
- Action plans: Upon receiving notification of their property's derelict status, owners will be required to submit an action plan for the property within 90 days. This aspect of the bill will ensure that no properties remain blighted for years
- Expedited processing: Permits for the renovation/demolition of derelict properties will be expedited to provide incentive for prompt corrective measures
- Refunds: Derelict properties renovated/demolished within 90 days from submission of the action plan will be refunded permit fees to provide further incentive for immediate corrective action
- Tax abatement: Timely remedy of a derelict property may result in tax abatement (up to fifteen years) on the improvements to the property (subject to adoption by individual localities)

As citizen volunteers, we have been working on this solution along with our city and state leaders for over three years. Now you can help us bring this solution home--just take a minute to call the Constituent Viewpoint operators at (800) 889-0229 (outside Richmond) or 698-1990 (Richmond area) to express your support for HB1671 and SB1094--then forward this letter to your list of tax-paying friends and relatives. Together we can help to ease our tax burden and improve the quality of life in our neighborhoods. This is time sensitive, please call the 800 number by 5:00 PM on Tuesday, January 27, 2009. If you would like to contact us, E-mail to: NQTF@verizon.net

Sincerely,

Martha Ann Creecy for the Neighborhood Quality Task Force (NQTF) of Portsmouth, VA

V 2 V..... Vacant to Vibrant
Revitalizing through the Power of Community