

March 16, 2005

The Honorable Norman H. Conway, Chair
Committee on Appropriations
Lowe House Office Building, Room 131
84 College Ave.
Annapolis, MD 21401 - 1991

Dear Delegate Conway:

I am writing to ask that as you consider HB 749, a bill establishing a mechanism for funding public art programs, you also take into account the existence and needs of the public art collections that the state already owns and has been building since 1784.

The Annapolis Collection and the Peabody Collection, which are administered by the Maryland Commission on Artistic Property of the Maryland State Archives, together comprise one of the most artistically and historically important public art collections in the nation. However, because of recent budget constraints, the state has not provided any funds for their care and conservation in four years.

In FY2000 and 2001, the General Assembly appropriated \$30,000 in each year to conduct a professional assessment of the conservation needs of the two collections. The assessment showed that the collections combined required, at that time, about \$5.7 million in conservation work to maintain the works and ensure their long-term survival for future generations.

It is difficult to overstate the importance of the artwork that the state already owns; the public sees it every day in and around the State House, Government House, and the legislative office buildings. I hope the Committee will recognize the importance of the public art of the past by providing a source of funds for the preservation of the collections administered by the Commission on Artistic Property.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Edward C. Papenfuse
State Archivist and
Commissioner of Land Patents

cc: Committee on Appropriations
Members of the Commission on Artistic Property