[Date]

The Honorable [name of legislator]

[Office street address]

[City, PA \_\_\_\_\_]

Dear [Representative/Senator \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_],

As a local [Main Street/Elm Street] program [manager, director, board member, business owner, property owner, resident] I am writing to respectfully request that you support increasing the funding for the Keystone Communities Program to $15 million before legislative supplements for the 2023/2024 fiscal year.

The Commonwealth’s Main Street and Elm Street Programs are funded through the Keystone Communities Program, which has seen an almost 90% cut in funding since 2009 when the program had $56 million available, or $5 per person, to now only recently having $6.4 million available, or only $0.54 per person in the Commonwealth. This grossly underfunded program is also the Commonwealth’s primary quality of life program bringing economic vitality, a sense of place, and community pride back to our communities, at a time when this is as important as it has ever been.

Even during the most recent year as we are at the tail end of the pandemic in 2022, Main Street and Elm Street programs have been able to deliver on the following impact: **108 FT Jobs** (net) & **170 PT Jobs** (net); **67 New Businesses** (net); **150 building rehabilitation projects**; **58 public improvement projects**; **6 new construction projects** and **over $14.6million public investment, matched with over $28.1 million in private investment**, and **28,480 volunteer service hours, valued at a total rate of over $848,000** all while being the boots on the ground responsive resource their communities have come to rely on.

Current funding levels are keeping the communities most in need of support from participating due to the requirement that local programs fund the local manager 100% on their own. Many of those local managers are spending 50% of their time or more just raising funds to support the program rather than doing the important work of community revitalization. Increasing this funding would help to build additional capacity in our communities. Pennsylvania is not investing sufficient funds in enhancing the quality of life in its communities, especially small town and rural communities, to make them competitive in a 21st Century knowledge-based economy.

Again, we respectfully request that you increase the funding for the Keystone Communities Program so our communities may achieve and maintain economically successful communities.

Sincerely,