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August 18, 2009

Honorable Michael D'Amore  
Council President  
Allentown City Council  
435 Hamilton Street  
Allentown, PA 18101  
*Via E-mail*

**Re: Bill No. 62 - 2009**

Dear Council President D'Amore,

On behalf of the 2,200 members of the Lehigh Valley Association of REALTORS® (LVAR), I am writing regarding Bill No. 62 which is scheduled to be taken up by City Council tomorrow evening. The Ordinance seeks to update the City's Property Rehabilitation and Maintenance Code by proposing a number of technical and substantive amendments.

We want to thank you and members of City Council for being open to discussion with our Association on the variety of amendments being considered. As real estate professionals, our members are always eager to provide constructive input on issues impacting the industry and consumers. We appreciate that Council continues to rely on our member's expertise on these important matters.

After careful review and discussion with our members, members of City Council, and the Bureau of Building Standards staff, LVAR is pleased to support virtually all of the amendments in Bill No. 62. We are particularly pleased with the positive changes being made to the Buyer Notification Program in Article 1760. It is our hope that the changes to the program will improve the process for requesting residential resale inspections, and ultimately continue to improve the overall safety and quality of the City's housing stock.

Additionally, LVAR supports cleaning up language in Section 1759.99(A, 1 and 2) to clarify and streamline the licensing requirement and create one fee for the rental license/registration. However, LVAR opposes the amount of the proposed fee increase if it is not coupled with a discounted fee for units that are in code compliance as it currently exists under Section 1759.99(2)(13). We are cognizant of the City's dire financial situation, and understand the rationale behind increasing registration fees. However, LVAR believes the fee reduction provides an incentive for property owners to keep their rental units in compliance with Code.

It is our hope that in the future, City Council will consider opportunities to encourage and incentivize responsible homeownership and investment in Allentown.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ryan Conrad".

Ryan T. Conrad  
Government Affairs Director

Cc: LVAR Board of Directors

Moving Real Estate Professionals in the Right Direction