



SOCIETY FOR AMERICAN ARCHAEOLOGY

November 10, 2011

The Honorable Kenneth J. Donnelly
Senate Chairman
State Administration and Regulatory Oversight Committee
State House, Room 413D
Boston, MA 02133

The Hon. Peter V. Kocot
House Chairman
State Administration and Regulatory Oversight Committee
State House, Room 22
Boston, MA 02133

RE: S. 2053

Dear Senator Donnelly and Representative Kocot:

The Society for American Archaeology (SAA) writes to express its strong opposition to a bill (S. 2053) pending before your committee. This legislation, if enacted, would result in substantial harm to Massachusetts' significant historic and archeological resources.

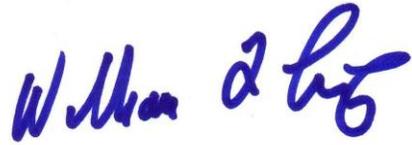
SAA is an international organization that, since its founding in 1934, has been dedicated to the research about and interpretation and protection of the archaeological heritage of the Americas. With nearly 7,000 members, SAA represents professional archaeologists in colleges and universities, museums, government agencies, and the private sector. SAA has members in all 50 states as well as many other nations around the world, including 143 members in Massachusetts.

S. 2053 would allow public and private sponsors of state-funded or permitted projects to ignore the recommendations of the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) to reduce, or eliminate, any adverse effects of such projects upon historical resources if those resources are not listed on the State Register of Historic Places.

This legislation, in essence, operates from the presumption that all of the historic resources worth preserving in Massachusetts are already known and listed on the State Register. In fact, there are more than 140,000 historical and archaeological sites inventoried in the state by the MHC, but not listed on either the State or National Register of Historic Places. In most cases the site location and perhaps some basic information is known, but there is often inadequate information about these sites to assess whether they are or are not appropriate to be listed on the state or national registers. The *de facto* result of S. 2053 would be the loss of virtually any protection under the law for these important resources. The bill would also discount consideration for sites yet to be discovered. As you know, the history of what is now the Bay State stretches back thousands of years. The archaeological record of the peoples who have inhabited the area over this span of time has not yet been comprehensively investigated and catalogued, and there is still much to be learned. Future discoveries of important historic and archaeological assets deserve the protections available under current law.

The historic and cultural heritage of Massachusetts needs to be conserved for future generations. SAA urges you to reject S. 2053. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "William F. Limp". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "W".

William F. Limp, Ph.D.
President