State Commission on the Restoration of the Capitol

The Commission was originally organized in 1979 and was reauthorized annually until 1988, when it was authorized for five-year periods by L. 1988, c. 303; L. 1993, c. 31; L. 1998, c. 25; L. 2003, c. 37; and L. 2008, c. 92.; L. 2013, c. 207; L. 2018, c. 55, and L.2023, c.55.

Section 1. The legislature hereby finds and declares that the state capitol in Albany, aptly described as a veritable school of architecture and museum of stone carving, is an extraordinary building and a repository of some of the most important chapters of our history as a state. Since construction of the Capitol was begun in an era when European forms still dominated the design of public buildings in the United States, it has survived the toll of time and a major fire, in which the state library, the bulk of its precious contents, and many offices and committee rooms were destroyed.

Unfortunately, as a result of efforts to provide additional office space to accommodate growth in government, major portions of the interior of the building reflect scores of piecemeal structural changes designed in haste and without the benefit of a central theme.

Accordingly, much of the beauty of the original interior has been marred, hidden or subdivided by partition in a style benefitting neither the utility nor the grandeur of the building.

A master plan for the state capitol was submitted to the governor and the legislature in December, nineteen hundred and eighty-two by the temporary state commission on the restoration of the capitol. Such master plan provides an integrated design for the rehabilitation and renovation work for a restored capitol. In addition, such temporary state commission has provided excellent interpretive services that have conveyed the story of the cultural themes associated with the capitol to school children and the public generally.

It is therefor appropriate that such temporary commission be continued as the state commission on the restoration of the capitol to apply its expenses and expertise through an advisory role in the implementation of such master plan and by carrying out related services. By continuing the temporary commission, the capitol will keep pace with and be a contributing part of the distinguished historical and architectural setting of public buildings of which it is an integral part.

§ 2. The temporary state commission on the restoration of the capitol is hereby renamed as the state commission on the restoration of the capitol (hereinafter to be referred to as the "commission") and is hereby continued until April 1, 2028. The commission shall consist of eleven members to be appointed as follows: five members shall be appointed by the governor; two members shall be appointed by the temporary president of the senate; two members shall be appointed by the speaker of the assembly; one member shall be appointed by the minority leader of the senate; one member shall be appointed by the minority leader of the assembly, together with the commissioner of general services and the commissioner of parks, recreation and historic preservation. The term for each elected member shall be for three years, except that of the first five members appointed by the governor, one shall be for a one year term, and two shall be for a two year term, and one of the first appointments by the president of the senate and by the speaker of the assembly shall be for a two year term. Any vacancy that occurs in the commission shall be filled in the same manner in which the original appointment was made. The commission shall elect a chairman and a vice-chairman from among its members. The members of the state commission on the restoration of the capitol shall be deemed to be members of the commission until their successors are appointed. The members of the commission shall receive no compensation for their services, but shall be reimbursed for their expenses actually and necessarily incurred by them in the performance of their duties hereunder.

§ 3. The commission may employ and at pleasure remove an executive director and such other personnel as it may require and fix their compensation within the amount appropriated therefore.

§ 4. The commission shall have the following functions, powers and duties:

(a) Review the master plan for the New York state capitol submitted by it to the governor and the legislature in December, nineteen hundred eighty-two, make and submit to the governor and the legislature such proposed revisions thereof and additions or deletions thereto as it deems advisable and

make such other recommendations with respect to such plan and for the implementation thereof as it deems advisable;

(b) Make such other studies, reports and recommendations as it deems advisable with respect to the restoration, rehabilitation, preservation, improvement and utilization of the capitol building and the grounds thereof, exclusive of the chambers, offices and other facilities of the legislature;

(c) Render such advice and assistance as the legislature or either house thereof may request with respect to the chambers, offices and other facilities of the legislature in the capitol;

(d) Provide advice and recommendations to the office of general services on the specialized maintenance needs of the capitol to assure the continued preservation of historically and architecturally important spaces in the capitol;

(e) Render advice to the office of general services in the development of plans and specifications for all master plan projects which may be approved, including assisting the office in its selection pursuant to statute of qualified architects for these purposes;

(f) Develop, in concert with the office of general services and other agencies of the state as appropriate, an interpretive program which explores the architectural, historic, artistic, social, political and cultural themes associated with the capitol and its setting among adjoining public buildings and spaces;

(g) Encourage the making of gifts and grants to the state to assist the commission in the performance of its powers, duties and responsibilities and for the implementation of such master plan projects, interpretive programs or other recommendations of the commission as may be approved by the appropriate authority;

(h) Provide advice and guidance to the division of military and naval affairs with respect to the care, conservation and exhibition of the collections under its jurisdiction as may be housed in the capitol;

(i) Render such other advice and assistance as may from time to time be requested.

§ 5. The commission may request and shall receive from any department, division, board, bureau,

commission or agency of the state or of any political subdivision thereof such assistance and data as will enable it properly to carry out its activities hereunder and achieve the purposes herein set forth.

§ 6. The commission shall submit an annual report to the governor and the legislature on or before the thirty-first day of December of each year that shall include a report on the status of the implementation of the master plan. The annual report submitted for nineteen hundred ninety-two shall include an evaluation and recommendation of the need, if any, for the commission to be extended beyond its expiration date of April first, nineteen hundred ninety-three.

§ 7. The provisions of this act shall in no respect diminish, alter or impair the powers or functions of the commissioner of general services relating to the supervision and control of the capitol pursuant to the public buildings law nor shall anything contained herein affect the provisions of subdivision one of section one hundred sixty-one-a of the state finance law relating to space in the capitol occupied by the legislature and committees and offices thereof.

§ 8. No existing right or remedy of any character shall be lost, impaired or affected by this act.

All obligations and duties of the temporary state commission on the restoration of the capitol shall be transferred and assigned to the state commission on the restoration of the capitol, consistent with the provisions of this act.

§ 9. This act shall take effect immediately, and shall remain in full force and effect until April 1, 2028.