

**Quincy Patriot Ledger - State may cut public-housing funds**  
**By Nancy Reardon, Patriot Ledger staff - 8/6/2009**

BOSTON - The state auditor is warning the Patrick administration against scaling back funding for public housing because, he says, it would delay crucial repairs, including those scheduled for housing units in Quincy.

But the state's capital bond funding may not help Quincy. Jay MacRitchie, executive director of the Quincy Housing Authority, said the state has already told him that maintenance work for the city's Snug Harbor Development has been tentatively put on hold.

"The most polite way to put it is: there's been a lot of deferred maintenance," MacRitchie said.

State Auditor Joe DeNucci sent a letter to Gov. Deval Patrick asking him to preserve the \$106 million bond cap for capital improvements at public housing authorities.

DeNucci said he has heard from housing advocates that the funding could be cut by as much as \$40 million, which he said could lead to health and safety risks for public housing tenants.

State housing and finance officials said no figure has been determined, but finance spokeswoman Cyndi Roy said the capital plan "will be scaled back to reflect the economic challenges."

Phil Hailer, spokesman for the state's housing department, said repairs are being prioritized on the basis of health and safety issues.

"A few years ago, public housing had been neglected for some time," he said. "I understand the nature of what the auditor is saying."

In October 2006, DeNucci's office released a report that uncovered deteriorating building conditions at public housing units across the state, including those in Quincy.

The report cited problems like rodent infestation, damaged foundations, extensive mold and mildew, and rotted window frames, siding and shingles as health and safety risks.

The Snug Harbor Development, which recently had a new roof installed, was awaiting state money for new windows, siding, storm doors and insulation before the project's funding was put on hold, MacRitchie said.

"We hope this remains a high priority for the governor," he said. "They have to prioritize, but we're hopeful and anxious that whatever money could come our way will."

Roy, the state's finance spokeswoman, said the capital funding is "something the governor recognized was underfunded and it's a priority for him."

Before Patrick took office, the funding cap was \$60 million, Roy said. In 2009, it was \$104 million, with an additional mid-year increase of \$5 million.

Roy said the state is still determining what it can afford in fiscal 2010 and should know in the next few weeks.

While exterior repairs at Snug Harbor may be delayed, MacRitchie said he has been told by state housing officials that stimulus money may be available to install a new heating system at the development.