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New Book Details Political History of Maryland's Smart Growth Initiative

COLLEGE PARK, Md. (July 15, 2008) – The politics and back-room maneuvering that led to the creation and implementation of Maryland's Smart Growth initiative are detailed in a new book published this month by the State University of New York Press.

Sprawl and Politics: The Inside Story of Smart Growth in Maryland was written by John W. Frece, a former aide to then Governor Parris N. Glendening and now Associate Director of the University of Maryland's National Center for Smart Growth Research and Education.

The 190-page book provides an insider's look at the origins of the Smart Growth program from Glendening's early years in office through its enactment in 1997 and its expansion and implementation through the end of the Democratic governor's term. It also traces what happened to the program when control of the State House passed from Glendening to Republican Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr. and, subsequently, to Democrat Martin O'Malley.

"Frece's account is a rare inside look at the process of land use policymaking at the state level," Dr. Gerrit-Jan Knaap, Executive Director of the National Center for Smart Growth, said in the book's Foreword.

"Although others have written about this subject before, never has the story been told by someone who attended all the key staff meetings, heard the private conversations between the governor and his adversaries, and himself played a key role in the dissemination and execution of the inspiring new

approach,” said Knaap, a Professor of Urban Studies and Planning at the university’s School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation.

Glendening launched the Smart Growth and Neighborhood Conservation initiative hoping to help the state’s existing communities, protect valuable farmland and natural resources, and save taxpayers from the cost of building new infrastructure to sustain poorly planned development. Frece, who was running Glendening’s press office when the initiative passed and went on to become the governor’s Special Assistant for Smart Growth, dissects the inner workings of this growth management effort, and reveals the political and public relations strategies required to assure the program’s adoption and implementation.

Maryland’s novel incentive-based approach gained national attention almost as soon as the legislation was passed by the General Assembly and continues to serve as a model for other states that are struggling with growth pressures, but are reluctant to regulate land use.

In addition to first-hand descriptions of back-room meetings with legislators, the policy development sessions with the governor and his staff, and the public relations strategies aimed at developing public support for the initiative, Frece’s book concludes with a list of the political “lessons learned” from the Maryland experience that can serve as guideposts to other states dealing with similar issues.

For information about the availability of the book, please visit:

<http://www.sunypress.edu>

Frece is also co-author of *My Unexpected Journey: The Autobiography of Governor Harry Roe Hughes* (The History Press, 2006), and co-editor of *Incentives, Regulations and Plans: The Role of States and Nation-states in Smart Growth Planning* (Edward Elgar, 2007). The author may be contacted at the phone number or email address above.

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