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For Immediate Release

Statement from Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh Regarding Governor Rendell's Proposed 2009-10 Fiscal Year Budget:

(Pittsburgh – June 29, 2009) Governor Rendell's latest budget proposal, announced June 26, makes additional cuts to the Public Library Subsidy that equates to a \$9.25 million loss of revenue. This would mean an approximate reduction in funding of more than \$600,000 for Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh. That's the equivalent of what it costs the Library to operate two mid-sized branches on an annual basis. The revenue loss also equates to the money the Library spends on nonfiction books for the resource collections at CLP – Main in Oakland or having a children's librarian in every Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh neighborhood library.

These cuts will be devastating at a time when people are using libraries more than ever before and relying on the libraries for critical services such as applying for jobs and unemployment and finding health care and social services referrals.

Libraries are more than books. They are the foundation of the educational system in our country; they are community anchors and engines for community economic development.

This budget cut, while not completely unexpected, is happening at a time when local funding for libraries is also constrained. The majority of Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh's revenue comes from sales tax, which is also down in this poor economy. Since Andrew Carnegie did not endow the Library, it relies on public and private funding for annual operations as well as capital improvements. With all of these constraints, what was meant to be "free to the people" is going to have a hard time surviving.

Libraries are a vital asset. We need to agree that library funding should be protected. Tell the Governor and your state elected officials NO to library funding cuts.

The bottom line is that if we do not receive the necessary funding to operate our library system, or are not able to immediately secure new sources of revenue to close the gap or shortfall in our budgets, we will be forced to cut services, programs and potentially branches, the last thing we want to do at a time when people are using their libraries more than ever before.

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About Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh

To Engage our Community in Literacy and Learning

Established as a public trust in 1895, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh serves the citizens of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County with a distinguished history of leadership among the country's great public libraries. Through its 19 neighborhood locations, including Main Library and the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh is the region's most visited asset, with 2.6 million visitors in 2008. Each year the Library provides valuable resources, programs, classes and training opportunities that engage the community in literacy, and life-long learning.

About Libraries for LIFE

Sustaining our Future

In 2009 Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh began a community dialogue to engage the region's citizens in a community process to protect the long-term sustainability of the City's library system.