

Bill would fund housing repair

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After two years of pressure from housing and community groups, the Legislature appears ready to pass a bill that for the first time would give financial support to neighborhood preservation efforts.

The proposed legislation, called the Neighborhood Preservation Companies Act, would make \$5 million available over the next three years to local citizen groups around the state to "rehabilitate, renovate and upgrade" primarily low-income housing in their communities.

Under the bill, local groups would be given money — on a matching fund basis — for

operating expenses. They could then apply for actual brick-and-mortar funding, such as federal community development money.

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Albany urged to rescue neighborhoods.

Groups here and around the state concerned with housing preservation are now entirely dependent on volunteer and foundation support.

The bill, sponsored by Assemblymen Edward Lehner and Herman Farrell, Democrats from upper Manhattan, would provide a local group with up to \$100,000 annually for three years. To be eligible, the group must have been formed at least a year ago.

The proposal has been approved by the Assembly Housing Committee and is currently before the Ways and Means Committee.

It is sponsored in the Senate by deputy leader William Conklin (R-B'klyn). It is now before the Housing Committee in that chamber.

The bill has been supported by such prestigious organizations as the Community Service Society and the Citizens Housing and Planning Council