



Kaczorowski to be presenter at Habitat II in Istanbul

The official representatives of Common Ground-USA at the international meeting of Habitat II in Istanbul, Turkey, are Common Ground-USA members Mary Rose Kaczorowski and Judith Vidaver, both of Ft. Bragg, CA. The representative to Habitat II from the International Union for Land Value Taxation is Alanna Hartzok, Chambersburg, PA.

In order to be represented at Habitat II, Common Ground-USA applied in late January to the United Nations for official recognition as a Non-Governmental Organization, and that NGO status was granted in late February. The Common Ground-USA Executive Committee approved Kaczorowski and Vidaver as the representatives in March. The entire Common Ground-USA board approved a small grant, from the Earl Hanson

bequest, to the two representatives in April to partially cover their expenses to the conference.

The official United Nations conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) will be held June 3-14, 1996. Habitat II will deal with two main themes: "sustainable human settlements development in an urbanizing world" and "adequate shelter for all". Special attention will be focused mainly on urban problems; hence, the U.N. Conference has been dubbed "the City Summit." Most environmental problems originate in cities (production, consumption, air and water pollution, solid and liquid waste).

The City Summit will place urbanization and urban/ rural

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Another Pennsylvania city goes two-rate

Pennsylvania Fair Tax Coalition State Coordinator Alanna Hartzok reports that Allentown, PA, has voted to change to a two-rate property tax. Major credit for the Allentown victory is due to the fine research and activist work of Joshua Vincent, Assistant Director of the Henry George Foundation of America.

Quoting the press release: "Allentown's voters on April 23 voted to accept the Home Rule Charter. One provision of the charter is a freeze on all taxes, save the property tax. The property tax is to be split into two rates with an ever-increasing ratio of land to building tax. By law, the ratio may only be increased. The ratio will start at 1.49 to 1 and expand to 4.70 to 1 by fiscal year 2001. It can go higher after that, if Council wants. Land value tax (LVT) can be overturned after 20012 by a referendum vote."

"Comments Dan Sullivan, Pittsburgh area coordinator for the Pennsylvania Fair Tax Coalition, upon hearing the good news about Allentown: 'This is Pennsylvania's most meaning-

ful victory yet for the land value tax approach to local public finance, not just because it is a major shift and etched in granite in the charter, but because it involved a campaign to the voters. Landowners will want to make the best use of this policy approach and promote its advantages to potential land users.'"

According to the Allentown, PA newspaper, The Morning Call, the Allentonians endorsed the governmental overhaul by 3,977 to 2,605. The elected seven-member Government Study Commission that wrote the charter believed citizens wanted more control over their government.

"The 39-page charter, two years in the making, freezes most city taxes, makes it more difficult to raise property taxes and creates a land-value tax system — a higher tax on land and a reduction in the tax on buildings. The system is touted for its influence on economic development and tax relief to many homeowners in cities such as Pittsburgh."