

April 27, 2018

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski  
Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Interior, Environment and  
Related Agencies  
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tom Udall  
Ranking Member  
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Interior, Environment and  
Related Agencies  
101 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall:

We write requesting that you support economic development, job creation, and our national heritage by appropriating \$97.9 million in funding for the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) for Fiscal Year 2019 (FY2019). Of the total request, \$53 million is for State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs), \$14 million is for Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPOs), \$500,000 is for grants to underserved communities, \$7 million is for the Save America's Treasures grant program, and \$5 million is for preservation grants to revitalize historic properties of national, State, and local significance. This request also includes \$13 million for the Civil Rights competitive grants initiative and \$5 million for competitive grants for Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

SHPOs and THPOs tie our nation's historic preservation programs together. SHPOs carry out the National Historic Preservation Act, which provides citizens the tools they need to revitalize, rehabilitate, and protect American heritage. Annually, SHPOs also review more than 100,000 federal undertakings for their impact on historic resources and survey more than 16.5 million acres for cultural resources. SHPOs also administer the Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit which, over the life of the program, has created more than 2.4 million jobs and leveraged more than \$131 billion in private investment.

THPOs carry out many of the same functions as SHPOs for tribal governments. Just as the SHPOs review federal undertakings on state lands, the THPOs review federal undertakings on tribal government lands. There were only 12 THPOs when they first received funding in 1996. Today, there nearly 190 THPOs and funding has not kept pace with the growing number of THPOs; in FY2017, 180 tribes received an average of \$58,000 in funding, more than \$20,000 fewer than when the program first started.

Additionally, we support \$13 million for competitive grants to fund the continuation of a Civil Rights initiative that preserves, documents, and interprets the sites and stories of the Civil Rights movement and the African-American experience.

Funding these historic preservation programs is vital for ensuring that the unvarnished story of

America is told. It is an investment in towns and cities throughout the country that benefit from tourists visiting historic sites and the public and private investment in restoring historic buildings. This funding is both an economic and historical imperative that creates construction jobs and protects historic resources that might otherwise be lost forever.

If you need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact our staff.

Sincerely,

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Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator

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Bill Cassidy  
United States Senator