

April XX, 2019

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

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

Dear Chairwoman Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall:

We are writing to request that you support economic development, job creation, and our national heritage by appropriating up to \$141 million in Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 funding for the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF). Of this total, we would request that \$60 million support State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs), \$20 million support Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPOs), and \$5 million fund a competitive grant program for State or Tribal Historic Preservation Offices to invest in geographic information systems-based mapping of historic resources. In addition, this total funding request should include \$7.5 million to fund the Save America's Treasures grant program, \$10 million to be utilized for competitive grants for Historically Black Colleges and Universities, \$1 million to go toward a competitive grant program to survey and document historic resources, and \$7.5 million to be allocated for the Historic Revitalization Subgrant Program to preserve historic resources in rural communities. We also request that up to \$30 million be provided for grants to preserve the sites and stories of efforts to advance civil rights in underrepresented communities, with the expectation that \$20 million of that total would go toward preserving the sites and stories of the African American Civil Rights movement.

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 are nearly 200 THPOs and funding has not kept pace with this growing number. As a result, in 2018, 179 tribes received an average of \$64,000 in funding, which was nearly \$20,000 fewer than when the program first started.

Funding these historic preservation programs is vital to ensuring that the unvarnished story of America is told. It is an investment in towns and cities throughout the country, helping to improve the economy of these communities by boosting tourism through their historic sites and by leveraging 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.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,