Dear Chairwoman McCollum and Ranking Member Joyce:

Thank you for your longstanding support for preserving America’s special places. We write requesting that you continue this support by appropriating the fully authorized $150 million in funding for the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2020. Of the total, we request that $61 million support State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs), $22 million support Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPOs), $18 million fund the Save America’s Treasures grant program, $10 million fund competitive grants for Historically Black Colleges and Universities, $10,000,000 for the Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization grants, and $1 million fund a competitive grant program to survey and document historic resources. As part of this request, we also support $20 million for grants to preserve the sites and stories of efforts to advance African American Civil Rights and $8 million for the newly established competitive grants programs to preserve the sites and stories associated with securing civil rights for All Americans.

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. In 2018 alone, SHPOs reviewed and commented on 130,500 federal undertakings and provided 95,200 National Register eligibility opinions. SHPOs also administer the Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit that has created more than 2.5 million local jobs and leveraged more than $144 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 200 THPOs, and funding has not kept pace with the growing number of THPOs; in 2019, 187 tribes received an average of $62,754 in funding, nearly $20,000 lower than when the program first started.

Funding these historic preservation programs is vital for ensuring that the complete 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 jobs and
protects historic resources that might otherwise be lost forever.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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Earl Blumenauer        Michael R. Turner
Member of Congress     Member of Congress