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The Honorable Jeff Merkley
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Merkley and Ranking Member Murkowski,

We are writing to request that you continue to support national heritage programs and economic development by appropriating up to $150 million in funding for the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2022. Of this total, we request that $60 million support State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs), $24 million support Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPOs), up to $20 million in funding be provided for the Save America's Treasures grant program, $10 million to fund competitive grants for Historically Black Colleges and Universities, $9 million be made available for the Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization grants, along with $1 million to fund a competitive grant program to survey and document historic resources. As part of this request, we also support $19 million for African American Civil Rights Initiative Competitive Grants and $7 million for the newly established History of Equal Rights Grant Program to preserve the sites and stories associated with securing civil rights for all Americans. Finally, we strongly support funding the semiquincentennial grant program to preserve historical sites commemorating the 250th Anniversary of the United States of American.

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 2019, SHPOs reviewed and consulted on 114,416 Federal undertakings and provided 86,132 National Register eligibility opinions. SHPOs also assist in administering 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, with the average THPO funding being $5,000 lower than when the program first started.

Funding these historic preservation programs is vital for ensuring that the complete story of America is told. These resources provide critical investments 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 of these funding requests.