United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 25, 2022

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:

Thank you for your longstanding support for preserving America's special places, and thank you in particular for providing $173.1 million in funding for the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) in last year's Interior and Environment Appropriations bill. We write to request that you continue this support by appropriating up to $200 million for the Historic Preservation Fund for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023. Of the total, we request that $65 million support State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs), $34 million support Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPOs), $35 million support the Save America's Treasures grant program, $12 million support competitive grants for Historically Black Colleges and Universities, $12 million support Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization grants, and $3 million support a competitive grant program to survey and document historic resources. As part of this request, we also support $24 million for African American Civil Rights Initiative Competitive Grants and $5 million for the newly established competitive grants programs to preserve the sites and stories associated with securing civil rights for All Americans. Finally, we strongly support $10 million for the semiquincentennial grant program to preserve historical sites commemorating the 250th Anniversary of the United States of America.

SHPOs and THPOs lead efforts to promote and preserve our nation's unique historic and cultural heritage. SHPOs carry out the *National Historic Preservation Act*, which provides citizens with the tools they need to revitalize, rehabilitate, and protect the resources our communities value most. In FY21 SHPOs reviewed and consulted on 124,300 Federal undertakings, provided 89,600 National Register eligibility opinions, and surveyed 8.5 million acres for cultural resources. SHPOs also assist in administering the Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit program that has created more than 2.9 million new jobs and leveraged more than $181 billion in private investment since the program's inception.

THPOs carry out many of the same functions 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 the program first provided funding in 1996. Today, there are more than 200 THPOs, and the average THPO receives several thousand dollars less than when the program first started. Congress and the United States have a responsibility to sustain these services as part of our government-to-government relationship with the tribes, and while funding for THPOs as a category has grown in past years, we must ensure those increases are felt at the level of individual Tribal Historic Preservation Offices as well.

Funding for these historic preservation programs is vital for ensuring the resources necessary to tell the complete story of America. Infrastructure investments funded by the bipartisan infrastructure law are also expected to greatly add to the workload of SHPOs and THPOs, so we must ensure these offices are appropriately equipped. Historic preservation 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.

Sincerely,

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator

Bill Cassidy, M.D.
United States Senator

Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator

Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

Maria Cantwell
United States Senator

Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator

Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator

Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

Martin Heinrich
United States Senator

Tim Kaine
United States Senator

Mark Kelly
United States Senator

Joe Manchin III
United States Senator

Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator

Jon Ossoff
United States Senator

Alex Padilla
United States Senator

Jack Reed
United States Senator

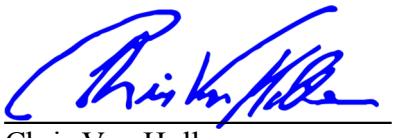
Jacky Rosen
United States Senator

Bernard Sanders
United States Senator

Tina Smith
United States Senator



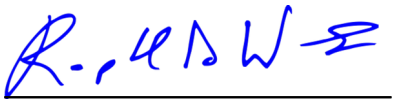
Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Raphael G. Warnock
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator