June 23, 2023

Dear Representatives Turner, Blumenauer, Leger Fernández and Carey:

On behalf of the organizations listed below, which are dedicated to the protection and preservation of our nation’s historic and cultural resources, we commend you for introducing H.R.3350 and call on Congress to pass this legislation.

For nearly a half-century, the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) has enabled the rescue and rehabilitation of historic places, helped communities protect and celebrate the people and stories that shaped them, and created opportunities for economic growth and job creation in every state in the Union.

The HPF helps the National Park Service administer heritage programs like the National Register of Historic Places and the Historic Tax Credit. It provides transformative formula grants to state and Tribal historic preservation offices, which are tasked with numerous federal- and state-mandated preservation responsibilities. And it funds competitive grant programs, like Save America’s Treasures, that serve as the linchpin of the federal government’s commitment to safeguarding our Nation’s heritage.

The HPF also provides vital financial support for grant programs that ensure we tell the story of all Americans. These include the Underrepresented Community Grant Program, which enables the inclusion of new sites and the amendment of existing listings in the National Register of Historic Places and as National Historic Landmarks. And it includes the African American Civil Rights, History of Equal Rights and HBCU Grant Programs, guaranteeing that future generations of Americans will learn about the long struggle for equality undertaken by those too often left on the margins.

Since its creation, the HPF has made possible the survey of roughly a million acres and identification of numerous cultural resources, resulting in over 98,000 listings on the National Register of Historic Places, with 1.9 million contributing resources. It has provided millions of dollars for the rehabilitation of historic buildings and leveraged more than $199 billion in private investment through the Historic Tax Credit, generating over 3 million jobs. And it has done so without spending a dime of taxpayer money, as all its revenue comes from oil and gas leases on the Outer Continental Shelf.

As the nation’s interest in preserving its heritage has grown, so have the demands on the HPF, which include the addition of new grant programs and greater responsibilities for state and Tribal preservation offices. Yet the HPF has stubbornly remained at the same authorized level -- $150 million -- that Congress first approved in the 1970s. Without long-term, adequate funding, the HPF will be unable to support preservation efforts that help us understand, interpret, protect, and learn from our shared history.
By re-authorizing the HPF for 10 years and increasing its annual authorization to $250 million, your bipartisan legislation not only confers long-term stability upon preservation efforts and the people they employ, but provides the opportunity for additional federal investment that will activate preservation projects, create jobs, and generate significant economic activity in communities from coast to coast.

We commend you for your leadership in introducing this legislation. But we know that time is of the essence. With the HPF set to expire at the end of September, Congress must act. As your allies in the preservation community, we pledge our commitment to helping you advance this bill through Congress and to the President’s desk so that the Historic Preservation Fund can continue supporting the historic preservation work that tells the full story of our Nation.

Sincerely,

American Anthropological Association
American Cultural Resources Association
American Institute of Architects (AIA)
Arizona Downtown Alliance
Arizona Preservation Foundation
Arizona Vintage Sign Coalition
Brick + Beam Detroit
Cincinnati Preservation Association
Cleveland Restoration Society
Coalition for American Heritage
Cornerstones Community Partnerships, NM
East Hillsborough Historical Society, Inc.
Greenhorns
Heritage Ohio
Historic Columbia
Knox Heritage
Landmarks Illinois
Louisiana Landmarks Society
Main Street America
McNair Historic Preservation
Missouri Preservation
National Alliance of Preservation Commissions
National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers
National Trust for Historic Preservation
Preservation Action
Preservation Austin
Preservation Connecticut
Preservation Houston
Preservation League of New York State
Preservation Virginia
Preserve Arkansas
Progress Through Preservation of Greater Akron
Society for American Archaeology
Society for Historical Archaeology
The Association for Preservation Technology
University of Maryland School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation
Washington Trust for Historic Preservation