

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 16, 2025

The Honorable Mike Simpson
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and
Related Agencies
2007 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chellie Pingree
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and
Related Agencies
1036 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Simpson and Ranking Member Pingree:

Thank you for your long-standing support for preserving America's special places. We write to request that you continue this support by appropriating \$225 million for the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2026. Of the total, we request that \$70 million support State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs), \$34 million support Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPOs), and \$121 million for seven existing competitive grant programs. This includes support for programs like the Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization grant program, which fosters economic development in rural communities through the revitalization of historic properties and the Semiquincentennial grant program, which celebrates the 250th Anniversary of the United States of America by restoring and preserving historic sites and structures that commemorate the founding of the nation.

SHPOs lead efforts to promote our nation's historic and cultural heritage. SHPOs carry out the National Historic Preservation Act, which provides citizens the tools they need to revitalize, rehabilitate, and protect the resources our communities value most. In FY 2024 SHPOs reviewed and consulted on 108,200 federal undertakings, provided 91,600 National Register eligibility opinions, and surveyed over 4.5 million acres for cultural resources. SHPOs also assist in administering the federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit program that has created more than **3.2 million new jobs and leveraged over \$235 billion in private investment** since the program's inception.

Just as the SHPOs review federal undertakings on state lands, THPOs review federal undertakings on tribal government lands. There were only 12 THPOs when they first received funding in 1996. Today, there are 228 THPOs for which Congress and the United States have a responsibility to sustain the government-to-government relationship with the Tribes. While

funding for THPOs as a category has grown in recent years, we must ensure those increases are felt at the level of individual Tribal Historic Preservation Offices.

Competitive grant programs under the HPF preserve, document, and exhibit our shared history. These programs address a wide variety of preservation needs across the country and fund various types of work. In 2022, the Idaho Heritage Trust was awarded a \$750,000 Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization grant to implement a subgrant program to facilitate the preservation and restoration of historic theaters in Idaho's rural communities. Nine theaters across Idaho received between \$49,000-\$100,000 to repair and preserve their historic venues. In 2022, the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry received a Semiquincentennial grant for the rehabilitation of the Colburn House in Pittston, ME, where Major Colburn worked with local Indigenous leaders and colonists to map a water trail route as well as quickly construct small boats for Benedict Arnold's campaign to seize Quebec in 1775 during the American Revolution.

A meaningful investment in the HPF will protect and promote the places that tell the story of America - especially as we prepare to commemorate America's 250th anniversary in 2026. Since 1976, the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) has been a successful federal-state partnership, leading investment in historic sites and buildings in communities throughout the country. The NHPA authorizes \$150 million annually to be deposited for the benefit of the HPF, however, in September 2024, the authorization for this deposit of funds lapsed. It is imperative to restore this authorization to address the ongoing funding needs and to provide stability to these preservation programs. Support for the Historic Preservation Fund is an investment in economic development, job creation, and our nation's heritage for the benefit of our future. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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