

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

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

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chair Murkowski and Ranking Member Merkley,

Thank you for your long-standing support for preserving America's special places. We write to request that you continue this support by providing up to \$250 million for the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2027.

As America commemorates the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence and the 50th anniversary of the Historic Preservation Fund this year, investment in the places that tell our nation's story is both timely and critical. An investment of \$25 million for digitization of state and Tribal records will accelerate the delivery of critical infrastructure projects by reducing the time needed for historic preservation reviews.

Furthermore, we respectfully request up to \$70 million to support State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs), \$34 million to support Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPOs), \$13 million to support Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and \$108 million for six existing competitive grant programs. These grants include programs like the Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization grant, 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 with the tools they need to revitalize, rehabilitate, and protect the resources our communities value most. In FY 2025 SHPOs reviewed and consulted on 101,200 federal undertakings, provided 73,800 National Register eligibility opinions, and surveyed over 3.5 million acres for cultural resources. SHPOs also assist in administering the federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit program that has created more than 3.4 million new jobs and leveraged over \$257 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 235 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 has grown over the years, we must ensure those increases are felt by individual Tribal Historic Preservation Offices by continuing to increase funding in this category to stay commensurate with the number of recognized THPOs.

A meaningful investment in the HPF will protect and promote the places that tell the story of America as we commemorate America's 250th anniversary. 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 the authorization for this deposit of funds will lapse in September of 2026. We appreciate the Committee's support of this authorization in FY26. It is once again imperative to restore this authorization to address the ongoing funding needs and to provide stability to these preservation programs and the communities, people, and places they sustain. 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.

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