



Testimony Submitted to the Appropriations Subcommittee on the Interior, Environment and Related Agencies, U.S. House of Representatives, regarding the FY13 appropriations for State and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices, historic preservation project grants and National Heritage Areas.

Request:

- \$46.925 million in appropriations from the Historic Preservation Fund for State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs).
- \$9.7 million in appropriations from the Historic Preservation Fund for Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPOs)
- \$10 million in appropriations from the Historic Preservation Fund for a Historic Preservation Grant Program run through SHPO offices
- \$17.4 million in appropriations from the Preservation and Recreation Account for National Heritage Areas

Funding for the Historic Preservation Fund and for the Preservation and Recreation Account – Core Sources of Funding for the Federal Functions Outlined in the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966

We would like to respectfully request \$66.2 million in appropriations for the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF). Recognizing our nation's economic challenges, this number represents a funding level approximately 17% less than FY 2010, and about 18% higher than the President's request - but still substantially less than 50% of the \$150 million authorized from the HPF each year. We would also like to request level funding for National Heritage Areas of \$17.4 million, paid for out of the Preservation and Recreation account.

Beginning with the HPF, we ask that this funding be allocated at \$46.925 million for State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPOs), which is level with FY 2012 and equal to the President's request, \$9.7 million for Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPOs) – which is a slight increase of 10%, and \$10 million for a fully competitive historic preservation grant program administered by the SHPOs in consultation with the National Park Service. This would restore some degree of programmatic capabilities lost with the elimination of funding for Save America's Treasures and Preserve America in FY 2011.

SHPOs carry out a substantial portion of our Federal historic preservation program that provides citizens the tools needed to revitalize, rehabilitate, and protect the places that give meaning to America. They also assure state and local input into the designation of the cultural resources that are important to them. Funding for SHPOs, leverages investments through local

jobs, non-federal contributions and long-term economic development. In 2011, the Rehabilitation Tax Credit, administered by SHPOs, leveraged over \$4 billion in private investment and created over 55,000 jobs. SHPOs, as required by the National Historic Preservation Act, also review federal projects for their potential impact on historic sites. In 2011, 140,600 projects were reviewed. Another vital component administered by the SHPOs, the Certified Local Government Grant program which, in 2011 provided small grants and assistance to 1,800 communities throughout the nation.

THPOs carry out many of the same functions as SHPOs, but on tribal lands. While the THPOs are exempt from matching requirements, over the life of this program, tribes overmatch the federal funds by a factor of between 5 and 10 to one. There are currently over 130 THPOs, compared to only 12 in FY96 when the program was first funded. Unfortunately, the amount of funding annually appropriated to the THPO program has not kept pace with this expansion. It is important to keep in mind that this expansion is the result of the recognition of tribes, not from out of control growth of a program. Thus, the addition of new THPOs each year without additional funding actually means substantial budget cuts for the tribes recognized by the program. With the growing popularity of outdoor recreation, tourism and amateur treasure-hunting, under-funding this program jeopardizes the irreplaceable cultural artifacts from thousands of years of American civilization.

We are also respectfully request \$10 million for the establishment of a fully competitive historic preservation grant program administered by SHPOs. Recognizing the difficult economic times we are in, and our country's need to better leverage our existing programs, this request represents only one third of the total previously funded through the Save America's Treasures and Preserve America programs. In FY 2011, funding for the Save America's Treasures and Preserve America programs – collectively representing slightly over \$30 million was completely eliminated, leaving no dedicated federal funding stream solely for the purpose of restoring, rehabilitating and surveying historic places of national importance. The justification for this, as published in the Interior Budget in Brief document last year, was so that the National Park Service could "focus available resources on managing national parks and other primary responsibilities." We take great exception to this observation.

The "Organic Act of 1916" created the National Park Service in the Department of the Interior "...to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein ...". Since 1933, the NPS has managed the Historical American Buildings Survey, the Federal government's oldest historic preservation program responsible for the creation of more than 556,900 measured drawings, large-format photographs, and written histories for more than 38,600 historic structures and sites. The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, which forms the basis of our Nation's federal historic preservation program within the Department of the Interior, further expanded the role of the NPS in the designation and maintenance of historic resources. Coupled with the fact that the NPS is the steward of more than 27,000 significant structures, 66,000 archaeological sites and 115 million objects in museum collections, one could argue that not only is historic preservation a core part of the mission of the NPS, it helps define it.

We would be happy to work with a broad group of legislators, preservationists, agencies and organizations to define the program to meet strict performance metrics – assuring a sensible and balanced program for restoring and sustaining our places of national significance and a good return on investment.

We are also seeking level funding (\$17.4 million) for National Heritage Areas, paid for out of the National Recreation and Preservation Account. National Heritage Areas, of which there are 49, have been individually designated by Congress because their natural, cultural, historic, and scenic resources are considered uniquely representative of the American experience. While the National Park Service provides technical assistance and funding, 85% of the support for National Heritage Areas comes from the impacted regions through private, state, and local government sources. The federal seed monies provided have spurred grassroots conservation efforts that are self-determining, self-defined and thereby reflective of their individual values in a national context.

Recognizing concern about the sustainability of Heritage Areas, recently, legislation has been introduced, which Preservation Action supports, that would formally define the program and establish performance metrics, and paths to self-sufficiency – so that we can get the best return on our national investment. The Administration’s proposed 50% reduction in funding for National Heritage Areas, so that they can focus resources on park operations and other critical partnership programs is disingenuous. In past attempts to cut this funding, Interior and the NPS have cited the lack of the program legislation that is now on the table – when they know full well of its existence – because they helped to draft it. Cutting funding by 50% because the legislation does not exist yet is counterproductive – unfairly harming the very program they are attempting to better define. Given the economic value of Heritage Areas, the number of jobs they produce (estimated at 152,324, paying \$3.2 billion in wages), and their ability to tie together history, place, tourism and environment – we believe they are a good investment and support small business.

The National Park Service is More Than Just Parks

Preservation and conservation are intertwined. In implementing the National Historic Preservation Act, there was recognition of this fact by placing the primary responsibility for both federally owned and non-federally owned resources of national significance within the Department of Interior, who subsequently assigned responsibilities to the National Park Service. Yet there seems to be an ongoing tension between natural resources or “parks” and their broader responsibilities for non-park based “partnership programs.” In the Administration’s budget, we are looking at continued level funding for SHPOs and THPOs, no funding replacing the \$30 million in project grants eliminated by not funding Save America’s Treasures and Preserve America, a 50% cut to National Heritage Areas, a \$1.4 million reduction in cultural resource stewardship, and reduced funding for construction and major maintenance (in the face of an enormous maintenance backlog). At the same time there is \$215 million proposed for natural resource stewardship programs (twice the amount of cultural), and a proposed increase of \$104 million to the Land and Water Conservation Fund – used primarily for land acquisition. We should be prepared to increase our investment in preserving the very assets we already own as well as new ones. How can we continuously ignore the \$150 million

annual commitment made through the Historic Preservation Fund (a number established in the 1970's mind you) when according to the National Park Service, only 58.5% of our historic structures are considered to be in good condition.

Based upon several years of similar trends, this past year, Preservation Action convened a Task Force consisting of eleven national historic preservation organizations, examined this problem, and published a series of findings and recommendations in a report called "Aligned for Success, Recommendations to Increase the Effectiveness of the Federal Historic Preservation Program." Among the Task Force's findings are that the current structure of the federal historic preservation program does not "provide for the levels of leadership, public and private partnerships, advocacy, innovation and visibility required to realize the transformative vision for historic preservation set forth in the 1966 Act." The Task Force also found that there exists a competition for resources between park-based and non-park based cultural resources – a finding directly related to the funding choices made by the National Park Service.

To correct the problem, the Task Force recognizes that visibility for the historic preservation program is key so that it can get the resources needed to fully realize the vision of the National Historic Preservation Act. These no-nonsense solutions don't require tremendous a lot of funding – attempting to maximize return on investment, and better positioning existing resources:

- Realign the responsibilities for Preservation Partnership Programs within the National Park Service under a Deputy Director for Historic Preservation and Heritage who reports to the Director of the National Park Service
- Designate a Senior Policy Officer for Historic Preservation and Heritage in the Department of Interior as a Special Advisor for Heritage to the Secretary of the Interior
- Make the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation Chairman a full-time position
- Designate a senior staff position for historic and cultural resources on the President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ)

We would welcome the opportunity to work with members of this Committee to find a way to facilitate these changes, and to provide encouragement or instruction to the National Park Service and the Department of Interior to make them happen. The result would be a more effective program, and one better able to sustain itself while at the same time focusing on our national heritage.

Our nation's cultural resources and natural resources are BOTH important. We believe that they should not be an either-or proposition. Further, during this time of economic challenge, and widespread discussion on investments in infrastructure, we respectfully ask that you consider investment in our cultural resources, the preservation of our heritage, and the jobs that go along with historic preservation as a vital part of the solution.

Preservation Action is a non-profit grassroots advocacy organization founded in 1974. Our membership is made up organizations and individuals throughout the United States who share an ongoing interest and concern in our nation's federal historic preservation programs.