

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Chair, Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Vice Chair, Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Chair, Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

**December 2, 2022**

Chair Leahy, Vice Chair Shelby, Chair DeLauro, and Ranking Member Granger:

On behalf of the undersigned coalition of national organizations dedicated to preserving our nation's historic and cultural resources, we appreciate the thoughtful and diligent work that has gone into the FY 2023 appropriations process. The Historic Preservation Fund (HPF), annually funded through the Interior Appropriations bill, has seen record levels of bipartisan support. As your work continues to complete the FY 2023 appropriations process, we respectfully urge your support of \$191 million for the HPF, the level outlined in the Chairman's Mark in the U.S. Senate for the HPF.

We offer our deep gratitude for the robust funding proposed for the HPF in both the House and Senate and your recognition of the increasing need for investment to sustain our nation's rich heritage of cultural and historic resources. Our coalition's original ask for the HPF in FY 2023 is \$200 million, a level that reflects the significant need to adequately support the vital components of the HPF. Investment in the HPF generates lasting economic and civic vitality for communities of all sizes and in all corners of the nation.

The HPF is the principal source of funding to implement the nation's preservation programs. We are enormously appreciative of the six successive historic funding levels Congress has provided to the HPF, including the FY 2022 enacted level of \$173.072 million, a significant \$29 million increase from enacted FY 2021 levels. While this recent increased investment in the HPF has facilitated innovative and impactful historic preservation work across the country, additional appropriations are needed to effectively tell and preserve the full American story for generations to come.

HPF funding supports fundamental preservation activities such as survey, nomination of properties to the National Register of Historic Places, public education, and project reviews required for federal Historic Tax Credit (HTC) projects. SHPOs and THPOs 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 2021 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 as SHPOs 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 they first received funding in 1996. Today, there are 217 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.

Among many highlights, we would like to emphasize the Committee's sustained support for the African American Civil Rights grants program and for the second year its expansion to preserve and highlight sites and stories associated with securing civil rights for All Americans, including women, American Latino, Native American, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, and LGBTQ Americans. The competitive grant programs within the HPF are having a transformative impact in communities throughout the country and these investments are helping preserve a broader historic narrative while revitalizing communities and creating local jobs. State and Tribal historic preservation offices are at the forefront of protecting our nation's historic and cultural resources and are consistently asked to do more with less funding. Finally, more than 2,000 certified local governments with preservation programs can access a portion of HPF funding to preserve what makes their communities special.

We request \$191 million be approved for the FY 2023 HPF appropriation. The HPF includes:

- State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPOs);
- Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs);
- African American Civil Rights competitive grants program;
- History of Equal Rights competitive grants program;
- Historically Black Colleges and Universities competitive grants program;
- Save America's Treasures competitive grants program;
- Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization competitive grants program;
- Underrepresented Communities competitive grants program; and,
- Semiquincentennial Preservation grants program.

Thank you for considering our request. We stand ready to assist in any way to support our recommendations.

Sincerely,

National Trust for Historic Preservation  
National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers  
National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers  
Preservation Action  
American Cultural Resources Association  
Society for American Archaeology  
National Alliance of Preservation Commissions  
American Institute of Architects (AIA)