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### ***FEDERAL UPDATE***

Senate to Vote on Omnibus Lands Package with SAT, Preserve America and Conservation System Authorization Bills

The "Omnibus Public Lands Management Act of 2009" (S. 22) was introduced in the Senate this week which includes the authorization bills for the Save America's Treasures (SAT) and Preserve America (S. 2262) programs, as well as the codification of the Bureau of Land Management's National Landscape Conservation System (S. 1139). The new lands package will contain an additional 40 bills and will be expedited for consideration under Senate Rule 14, which waives most procedural hurdles to consideration and requires two procedure cloture votes and then a vote on final passage. The Senate will have a rare Sunday session on January 11<sup>th</sup> to hold a cloture vote on the motion to proceed to the bill. With 98 sworn-in senators, 59 votes will be required to proceed. If the bill passes on Sunday the next steps would be to hold a second cloture vote Jan. 14<sup>th</sup> to end debate and then a vote on final passage on January 16<sup>th</sup>.

However, Senator Tom Coburn (R-OK) has signaled he will oppose the lands package and has publicly cited both the SAT and Preserve America programs as "a favorite piggy bank for congressional earmarks." It was unclear at press time how many Senators may actually be in Washington for the vote on Sunday and the Senate leadership was making the rounds to ensure a quorum.

Should the omnibus lands package pass the Senate next week, the House has indicated it is ready to take up the bill shortly thereafter. Stay tuned for breaking developments.

### Economic Stimulus Package May Be Delayed Until February

President-elect Obama met with House and Senate leaders this week to begin shaping the economic stimulus package, which will not be ready for signature immediately after Obama is sworn in on January 20<sup>th</sup> as previously planned. Senate Minority Leader McConnell has insisted on taking up to six weeks to consider the package with a possible vote scheduled shortly after the Presidents Day recess in February. However, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi stated that there would be no February recess if Congress fails to pass the stimulus package. To date, the broad elements of the package include: a payroll tax credit (a key part of Obama's campaign platform); tax incentives for companies that hire new workers and avoid layoffs; and a net operating loss carry-back provision that would allow businesses to use losses from 2008 or 2009 to offset taxable income from five prior years and receive an immediate refund. More specific elements of the stimulus could include modernizing 75 percent of federal buildings and improving the energy efficiency of two million homes to save consumers and taxpayers billions on energy bills; an \$85 billion infrastructure plan being crafted by the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee; and the creation of three million new jobs, some of which would be in the emerging "green" technologies area of the economy.

House Approves  
New Rules  
Package that  
Affects Term  
Limits, Motions  
to Recommit and  
Extend Votes on  
Bills, Earmarks,  
and PAYGO  
Provisions.

The National Trust and its preservation partners developed a stimulus proposal of its own for lawmakers' consideration to benefit a wide range of historic and cultural resource needs at the Federal and state level, either directly through grants or expansion of existing tax credits. The preservation stimulus proposal is being circulated to the House and Senate leadership as well as key committees of jurisdiction. To review the preservation stimulus proposal in full please visit <http://www.preservationnation.org/take-action/advocacy-center/platform/economic-stimulus.html>.

### New Rules Package Approved in House

The House passed a rules package for governing the chamber in the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress on Tuesday that includes several important changes:

- Omitting the three-term limit on committee chairmen that dated back to 1994.
- Another rule will affect the minority's ability to offer motions to recommit amended bills to committee, a procedure that can effectively kill legislation. Under the proposed Democratic changes, any vote to recommit an amended bill must include the word "forthwith" — which means the House must vote on the amended bill within minutes. The change would mean that the minority could no longer request that amended bills be recommitted "promptly," a word that in House parliamentary language means sending a measure back to committee for burial.
- Another proposal would rescind a rule intended to limit the time that closed votes were left open so that leaders could alter the outcome.
- Democrats also say they will close a "loophole" that has allowed lame-duck lawmakers to negotiate post-House employment contracts in secret while they are still serving. The new rule would extend disclosure requirements about job negotiations with outside employers to include the period from when a lawmaker's successor is elected through the end of that lawmaker's House service.
- Another proposed rule change would make small changes to the pay-as-you-go requirements that any tax cuts or increase in spending be offset. The change would allow lawmakers to link bills that did not meet pay-go requirements with other bills that did have the offsets.
- The new rules will require Members (starting in FY 2010) to post their earmarks requests on their individual web sites at the time they make them, and explain the purpose of the earmark and why is a valuable use of taxpayer money. Earmark disclosures tables will also be

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available during subcommittee markups rather than full committee markups. Non-project earmark requests would be held 50% of 2006 earmarks (\$17 billion). Earmarks would be held below one percent of discretionary spending in future years, which would amount to approximately \$10 billion annually.

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