

**NATIONAL  
TRUST  
FOR  
HISTORIC  
PRESERVATION®**

**Richard Moe**  
PRESIDENT

October 19, 2009

The Honorable Nick Rahall, Chairman  
Committee on Natural Resources  
1324 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Nick:

As you develop and consider proposals to make the Land and Water Conservation Fund a true trust fund, I urge you to treat its companion program, the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) accordingly. The national historic preservation program supported by the HPF is critically in need of guaranteed, permanent and full funding in order for states to perform the functions mandated by the 1966 National Historic Preservation Act.

When it was first authorized in 1976, the HPF was modeled after the Conservation Fund and intended to be mutually supportive in enhancing both the built and natural environments, and using funds from the depletion of non-renewable resources for protecting America's non-renewable natural, historic and cultural treasures. Historic preservation and the programs funded through the HPF foster the conservation of natural resources by re-using structures in urban and rural areas nationwide. By focusing reinvestment in existing communities, preservation helps avoid unnecessary sprawl in undeveloped areas and in countless jurisdictions across the country, it is an integral component of comprehensive land-use planning.

With few exceptions, State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPOs) have not received any increase in HPF funding over the years while budgets have been cut drastically in almost every state. In the meantime, however, their duties have expanded considerably. They are, for example, a fundamental part of the Federal Historic Tax Credit Program's review process. This is a tremendous catalyst for job creation and the tax credit has leveraged billions of dollars in private investment in historic neighborhoods since Congress enacted it in 1976. In addition to saving historic places, last year this incentive created over 67,000 jobs and generated \$5.64 billion in rehabilitation activity. The program has grown exponentially and many states also have their own historic tax credits that warrant SHPO support as well. Similarly, the number of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs) that protect the cultural heritage of the country's indigenous peoples has increased, but the total funding level for THPOs over the last several years has been reduced and flat-lined.

Save America's Treasures (SAT) and Preserve America are also funded by the HPF. SAT has been cut by \$10 million in recent years and full funding is essential to preserving some of the nation's most historic resources. It is the only federal source of "bricks and mortar" preservation funds that has provided more than \$345 million in federal challenge grants to almost 1,000 historic preservation projects since the program was founded in 1998. As a public-private

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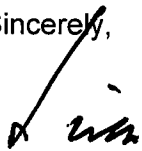
partnership with the National Park Service as the lead agency, it leverages millions of additional private dollars from foundations, corporations, and individuals and has made the difference in saving hundreds of historic sites around the country. Every federal dollar granted must be matched by a non-federal dollar doubling its value. The need remains great. In the first five years of the program SAT received 1,648 grant applications totaling more than \$773 million in requests for critical preservation assistance. Preserve America also provides grants to historic places that demonstrate a great degree of historic integrity and also designates them as "Preserve America Communities." These grants support heritage tourism and educational programming activities that maximize the economic and educational value of historic assets.

The recently released 2009 "Second Century Commission Report" calls for permanent HPF funding and states "a permanent appropriation for the Historic Preservation Fund at the full authorized level is vitally important so that the NPS can provide financial and technical assistance to state, tribal and local governments, and other preservation organizations [such as those that participate in the SAT program], and ensure that America's prehistoric and historic resources are protected within and beyond park boundaries."

The goals of the Land and Water Conservation Fund and the HPF are mutually supportive and I hope you will consider making it guaranteed, permanent and fully funded. These days more and more Americans are turning to the very heart of our common experience, to the institutions, history and traditions that define us as a nation. It is the National Trust for Historic Preservation's mission to ensure that these vital cultural resources are preserved for generations of Americans to come and full funding for these historic preservation programs would represent a true investment. It would be multiplied many times over through public-private economic partnerships and ventures. Perhaps most importantly, though, this investment would ensure the protection of hundreds of historic structures and sites throughout the nation that might otherwise pass from our shared heritage.

Warmest regards.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "RMoe", written over a diagonal line.

Richard Moe

RM:pl