

Statement of Richard Moe
President, the National Trust for Historic Preservation
for the
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
on
Investments in Clean Energy and Natural Resources Projects and Programs to
Create Green Jobs and to Stimulate the Economy

December 10, 2008

As Congress considers strategies to address this serious recession, the National Trust for Historic Preservation applauds the Committee's leadership in calling for investment in energy and natural resources that would create jobs, stimulate the economy, and help to revitalize America's public assets. The National Trust supports the principle that short-term stimulus proposals must have long-term benefits for our economy, environment, and society. We need to focus on using resources wisely and I see this economic crisis as an opportunity to place the nation on a better course toward a more sustainable future.

I am Richard Moe, President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the largest private, nonprofit membership organization dedicated to protecting the irreplaceable. Chartered by Congress in 1949 and recipient of the National Humanities Medal, the National Trust provides leadership, education, advocacy, and resources to save America's diverse historic places and revitalize communities. Our headquarters in Washington, six regional offices, and 28 historic sites work with our 270,000 members and thousands of local community groups in all 50 states.

Much of the national dialog surrounding relief for the country's ailing financial markets, businesses, lending institutions, and industries refers to the larger implications for "Main Street." Given the substantial role the National Trust and the preservation community play in supporting Main Street jobs, revitalization, and economic development, we have been encouraged by this critical emphasis on the country's historic core – its communities – including rural communities – and the people who make them work. So many of these places and their economic well-being are linked to public land, and the historic and cultural resources located in their midst.

Much of the land managed by the National Park Service (NPS), U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is located in rural areas with communities that benefit from all of the economic activities associated with this country's diverse array of public places. These activities include services for visitors and meeting all the needs of historic buildings, infrastructure, trails, roads, archaeological sites, and museum collections that require stabilization, maintenance, conservation, surveys, and management. This provides jobs for contractors, architects, engineers, and cultural resource specialists. The National Trust proposes stimulus plans that will rebuild Main Street and rural communities through reinvestment in public land, and historic and cultural resources across America.

Our national assets on public land have been neglected for far too long. Significant reinvestment in the historic and cultural resources therein would generate jobs and support local businesses, often in parts of the country where the need is great, such as rural communities. And stewardship that emphasizes reusing and rehabilitating the existing buildings, infrastructure, communities, and places we already have is inherently more efficient and sustainable.

For example, the reuse of older and historic buildings on national public land alone is a powerful tool for job creation and employment retention. Rehabilitation generally uses about 20 percent more labor and, in turn, produces a greater number of jobs than new construction. As compared with new construction, every \$1 million spent to rehabilitate a building results in:

- \$120,000 more dollars initially remaining in the community;
- Five to nine more construction **jobs created**;
- An average of 4.7 more new permanent jobs created;
- **Household incomes in the community increasing** by \$107 more than through new construction;
- **Retail sales in the community increasing** by \$142,000 – \$34,000 more than through new construction; and
- Real estate companies, lending institutions, service vendors, and restaurants receiving **more direct monetary benefits**.

The Trust would like to see Congress create and fund a comprehensive program to unlock the economic potential of the nation's public land and cultural resources. Using the precedent set by the great corps network established in the 1930's, we propose establishing a new "National Public Land Service Corps" that would address maintenance and stewardship of historic structures and other cultural resources under the jurisdiction of the three principal land agencies of the federal government. A National Public Land Service Corps would help us manage, identify, and protect the places that must be preserved, and in so doing change our relationship to energy use, exploration, and extraction on public land. This investment would strengthen local economic development and provide new jobs through rehabilitating existing structures, documenting and caring for cultural resources, and expanding renewables and other energy sources. All of this could be accomplished while training a whole new generation in caring for the places and objects that help define our heritage. I have outlined the Trust's proposals by agency.

Public Land Investments for Jobs, Energy Delivery, and Revitalization

1. Bureau of Land Management

A significant portion of a National Public Land Service Corps funds would be used to conduct cultural resource surveys and consult with Tribes on BLM-managed land that is slated for energy development. While BLM, "manages the largest, most diverse and

scientifically most important body of cultural resources of any federal land agency,” only seven percent its 258,000,000 acres has been surveyed. Much of the land targeted for alternative energy development remains unsurveyed. This leads to difficulties with the agency’s two-fold mission to provide energy and protect its cultural resources. The lack of information on the location and significance of historic and cultural sites results in costly delays and conflicts. Industry needs certainty while we strive to protect historic and cultural resources, and surveys can provide the comprehensive information we need. To accomplish this, the National Trust proposes a \$40 million increase each year for two years in the BLM 1050 account to hire professionals for surveys, studies, and Tribal consultations, particularly in the Southwest where the demand for solar energy is greatest.

A portion of this funding should also be directed toward the protection of fragile archaeological ruins, trails, and historic buildings, many of which are located in the National Landscape Conservation System, the “crown jewels” of BLM land. Site stabilization is needed in places like the Canyons of the Ancients National Monument in southwest Colorado; historic mining camps in Grand Canyon Parashant National Monument in northwest Arizona; Chiles historic site on the Potomac Heritage National Scenic Trail in Maryland; and Piedras Blancas Historic Light Station Outstanding Natural Area in central California. Additionally, many significant artifacts in BLM museums lie neglected in boxes and drawers. These need to be cataloged, conserved, and interpreted appropriately.

Heritage tourism is one of the fastest growing segments of the travel industry and it can be one of the most beneficial to local economies. Visitors to historic and cultural sites stay longer in an area and spend more money than other tourists. Utah’s San Juan County Economic Director recently told the National Trust that 72 percent of the area’s tourism relies upon international visitors drawn to Cedar Mesa’s ancient Native American ruins. Eighty percent of these visitors employ local tour operators that generate jobs in one of the state’s poorest counties.

2. National Park Service

A National Public Land Service Corps could provide an historic infusion of capital into National Parks for planning, design, and construction. It has been nearly 50 years since the Parks have received a significant boost for construction and rehabilitation, and now there is an enormous backlog of projects in need of attention with an estimated \$1 billion in projects that are ready and awaiting funding. These include the preservation of historic structures, making Park facilities more energy efficient, and restoring trails and open space. The National Park System already employs upwards of 20,000 workers and generates about \$12 billion in consumer spending for the economy – about four times more than Congress appropriates for Parks annually. It is logical that any stimulus plan would focus on the National Park System with a valuable inventory of projects ready for easing this recession.

Stimulus funding should address deferred maintenance in the System. Of the \$8.7 billion in overall Park maintenance needs, \$1.9 billion is for the preservation and maintenance of

27,000 historic structures listed in or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The line item construction budget for projects ready to go includes \$50 million for the rehabilitation of historic structures. This would generate jobs for architects, engineers, construction workers, and cultural resource specialists. More projects could be added in 12 months if they could get in the pipeline now.

- **Historic Buildings and Structures** – According to the recently released report on Park cultural resources by the National Academy of Public Administration, 46 percent of structures in our National Parks are in fair or poor condition. Even Independence Hall, one of America’s most historic buildings, needs \$3.7 million in repairs.
- **Transportation and Infrastructure** – There is an enormous amount of work to be done with about \$1 billion in road repair and infrastructure projects ready and awaiting funding.
- **Curatorial and Museum Collections** – There is a backlog in cataloging curatorial resources and museum collections in the National Parks. Nearly half of the Parks’ collections is uncataloged – about 56 million items. These collections could be managed by contract services and brought on-line expeditiously. At present the continued use, accessibility, and preservation of valuable materials and information is threatened. Just the way the Historic American Buildings Survey was established to create jobs in documenting historic resources, a new Public Land Service Corps could accomplish similar goals and protect important cultural collections at risk.
- **Facility Energy Retrofits** – In keeping with the NPS goal of making all the Park facilities carbon neutral in time for the 2016 centennial, Park facilities should undergo a comprehensive energy efficiency upgrade and retrofit program. This would not only produce jobs, but would also lead to more sustainable and cost-effective Park operations.

3. US Forest Service

The same type of resources targeted to the NPS under a National Public Land Service Corps should be available to the US Forest Service as well to survey, rehabilitate, and maintain historic structures and other cultural resources on USFS land. The Forest Service estimates that it lacks \$38 million for deferred maintenance costs for historic resources. Addressing this need would create engineering, design, and construction jobs in rural areas of the country that have been deeply affected by the recession. This work could also focus on energy efficiency retrofits for historic buildings used for Forest Service operations – reducing long-term operating costs – and the rehabilitation of tourist facilities to foster rural heritage tourism.

Federal agencies receiving funding from the stimulus package should be allowed to retain a portion of the money for contract administration and oversight.

Conclusion

America's public land and the diverse array of historic and cultural resources that are part of them help define us as a nation. These national assets deserve the highest degree of preservation, maintenance, and stewardship independent of their potential to foster energy independence, stimulate the economy, and create jobs. From a practical standpoint, investing in the certainty that comes from early historic and cultural surveys on land slated for energy development avoids costly conflicts later and protects our heritage. The rehabilitation of historic buildings and structures on public land generates jobs and stimulates local economies hardest hit by the recession. Access and improvements to collections and museums will provide more opportunities for heritage tourism. Investing in our nation's public land patrimony is a long-term investment in preserving these places for generations to come.

History shows us how effective a public land component to a recovery plan has been in the Depression Era service corps network that relied – in part – on harnessing the potential of historic and cultural resources. It is time to look to the lessons of the past and create a new Public Land Service Corps to fund the long list of backlogged construction and maintenance projects in the leading federal land agencies. Embarking upon a new, comprehensive, program to fund the queue of projects ready to go in the BLM, NPS, and USFS would open up an array of opportunities for the American people in adjacent towns, Main Street neighborhoods, and especially rural communities. Surveys, assessments, restorations, rehabilitations, energy retrofits, infrastructure/transportation works, curatorial services, and all types of maintenance projects employ people, leverage federal dollars, and address an unmet need that will have an exponential return on the Treasury's initial outlay. Funding this initiative now will carry the nation through the present recession and put the country on a much more sustainable footing for the future.