

STATEMENT OF DR. STEPHANIE TOOTHMAN, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, CULTURAL RESOURCES, PARTNERSHIPS AND SCIENCE, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON FEDERAL LANDS, COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, CONCERNING H.R. 295, A BILL TO REAUTHORIZE THE HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM.

February 11, 2016

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to present the Department of the Interior's testimony on H.R. 295, a bill to reauthorize the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Historic Preservation program.

The Department supports enactment of H.R. 295. This bill would reauthorize annual appropriations of \$10,000,000 to the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Historic Preservation program through 2025. The bill amends the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996 to reauthorize funding for the preservation and restoration of historic buildings and structures on the campuses of historically black colleges and universities.

The historic and educational value of the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) program is an integral part of our full and diverse American story. The majority of HBCUs were founded following the Civil War to provide an equal opportunity for education to African-Americans living during the era of Reconstruction. A substantial number of these campuses have historic buildings that date to the Reconstruction period. The campuses and their historic buildings are reminders of the promise of equality and should be preserved not only for what they represent in American history, but for the continuing use of students who attend HBCU's throughout the mid-Atlantic and southern United States. The sight of a newly constructed academic campus gave hope to those that had been previously denied an opportunity for education and freedom. These buildings stand as witnesses to the past, and should be restored for the use of future generations of students.

With the passage of the first and second Morrill Acts (1862 and 1890) and the subsequent Higher Education Act of 1965, a system of 107 Historical Black Colleges and Universities have been established across the mid-Atlantic and south. The nation has continued to highlight the importance and necessity of these institutions through Executive Orders and congressional actions supporting their vital role in the education of African-American youth. H.R. 295 represents the recognition and reinvigoration of this ongoing commitment in the centennial year of the National Park Service.

H.R. 295 will authorize HBCUs to receive much needed funding to support the critical needs of these institutions through the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF). Historic preservation funding would support efforts to make these buildings both safe and functional, including: structural stabilization, repairing damaged masonry, abating environmental hazards such as lead paint and asbestos, replacing antiquated electrical and plumbing systems, fixing leaking roofs, repairing termite damage, and providing handicapped accessibility. The historic buildings on these

campuses have special repair needs that preservation funding could address by employing highly skilled trades and quality materials, the costs of which may strain a limited college budget. Subject to future HPF funding, the Act would enable the HBCU community to invest in the revitalization of these irreplaceable campus properties.

Previously, HBCUs received Historic Preservation Fund allocations to repair and revitalize buildings that were listed in, or considered eligible for listing in, the National Register of Historic Places, the nation's official list of places worthy of preservation. Between 1995 and 2006, over \$45 million of HPF grants were awarded to HBCUs. In FY 2009 the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act appropriated an additional \$15 million from the HPF to fund HBCUs. Overall, these Historic Preservation Fund apportionments supported over 60 institutions, funding 131 bricks and mortar projects at HBCUs across the mid-Atlantic and the south.

HPF funding allocated through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 supported preservation work on 21 HBCU campuses including a project at Allen University in South Carolina completed in 2012. The university used over \$1 million in HPF funding to rehabilitate the Chappelle Auditorium by repairing doors and windows, repointing the masonry exterior, addressing site drainage, and installing a new fire protection system to enable continued use of the National Register-listed auditorium.

Dillard University in New Orleans, Louisiana, used HPF funding for the Camphor and Hartzel Buildings, which both sat vacant for several years after sustaining flood waters in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. An \$800,000 grant allowed for the restoration of more than 400 windows and doors of the building and made the interior safer with lead paint abatement. Most importantly, this funding allowed Dillard to utilize the property for a new generation of students.

These are just a few examples of the type of change that the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Historic Preservation program can bring to both a campus and a community. Today, these historic and vital campuses are proud to remain the custodians of access and opportunity for higher education in under-served communities. The enactment of H.R. 295 will help to preserve unimpaired for future generations this important part of the American story.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my statement. I would be happy to answer any questions that you or other members of the subcommittee may have regarding this bill.