

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. 2817, A BILL TO AMEND TITLE 54, UNITED STATES CODE, TO EXTEND THE AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION FUND.

February 11, 2016

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to present the Department of the Interior's testimony regarding H.R. 2817, a bill to amend Title 54, United States Code, to extend the authorization of appropriations for the Historic Preservation Fund.

The Department strongly supports enactment of H.R. 2817. This bill would reauthorize annual deposits of \$150,000,000 in the National Historic Preservation Fund through 2025 from revenues due to the United States under the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act. The authorization expired on September 30, 2015 and the Department strongly believes that this program needs to be reauthorized as soon as possible.

Fifty years ago, the Special Committee on Historic Preservation of the U.S. Conference of Mayors issued a report that made broad recommendations regarding the pressing need for a national historic preservation program. In response to the concerns raised by the U.S. Conference of Mayors, Congress passed the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, which established the national historic preservation program. As we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Act, one of the most significant amendments was the creation of the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) in 1976.

Congress created the HPF and directed that a small portion of revenue collected from federal offshore oil and gas development be employed to identify and protect America's irreplaceable historic and archeological treasures. These revenues provided to the HPF have been used to preserve resources in almost every single county across the nation. The work accomplished by this fund in preserving our national identity is just as important now as it was when it was created.

As the administrator of the Historic Preservation Fund, the National Park Service facilitates the allocation of federal grants to states, tribes, local governments, and nonprofits partners to carry out the federal mandates authorized under the National Historic Preservation Act. Funding from the HPF supports the 59 State Historic Preservation Offices – representing each state, U.S. territory, and the District of Columbia – in their efforts to address local and State preservation priorities. These efforts include: assisting communities and organizations with nominations to the National Register of Historic Places, surveys and inventories of historic properties, assistance and advice to federal, state, and local agencies in carrying out their historic preservation activities, evaluations of proposals for Federal historic preservation tax incentives, and technical

assistance on methods and means of preservation. HPF grants have supported over 80,000 listings on the National Register of Historic Places and surveys of millions of acres of land for cultural resources.

In FY 2015, the total HPF appropriation to states was \$46.925 million. The average grant to states was a little more than \$795,000. This funding leveraged more than \$29 million in state and local matching funds, resulting in an average expenditure of \$1 million per state on historic preservation activities, and supported more than 1,000 jobs throughout State Historic Preservation Offices. Noteworthy projects in FY 2015 included a partnership of the Utah State Historic Preservation Office, the University of Utah, and the Utah Heritage Foundation to fund a study of mid-century modern buildings on the university's campus. The study provided an intensive survey of 30 individual buildings and provided a contextual history of the Post-WWII campus. This information can now be used to list properties in the National Register of Historic Places, and also help guide the university as it plans projects that might have the potential to affect historic properties.

The Historic Preservation Fund is a model of what can be accomplished through public-private partnerships by enabling state, tribal, and local partners to work together to preserve their cultural heritage. The act mandates that each state direct at least 10% of their annual HPF allocation to local preservation activities in more than 1,930 Certified Local Governments across the country. Certified Local Governments are communities that have made a commitment to historic preservation by establishing a preservation commission and by partnering with the NPS and their state in the Federal Preservation program.

The Historic Preservation Fund program also provides support for the preservation and protection of America's tribal heritage. Since Fiscal Year 1990, Congress has appropriated funds to assist tribes in protecting vanishing tribal cultural resources, to initiate preservation programs, and to encourage full tribal participation in the national preservation program. Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPO) are one of the fastest growing preservation partnerships within the national preservation program. The inclusion of tribal values and the acknowledgment of sovereign tribal governments have significantly enhanced the national program. Funding provided by the HPF to THPOs supports their role as agents of heritage preservation within their communities.

In addition to funding Tribal Historic Preservation Offices, the Historic Preservation Fund preserves and promotes the unique cultural traditions of native people through tribal heritage grants. Since 1990, this competitive grant program, open to all federally-recognized tribes, Alaska Native Corporations, and Native Hawaiian Organizations, has funded the preservation of specific places, the documentation of traditional arts and crafts, the recording of oral histories with elders, and the preservation of tribal languages. In FY 2015, 14 competitive grants were awarded totaling over \$530,000.

Telling the stories of all Americans is at the core of the Historic Preservation Fund's efforts. Current estimates place the combined representation of African American, American Latino, Asian America, Native American, Women and LGBT sites in the National Register of Historic Places and among National Historic Landmarks at less than 10% of total listings. In FY 2014,

\$500,000 was appropriated from the Historic Preservation Fund for a grant program for underrepresented communities. The NPS awarded grants to 13 states to assist in the development of surveys and nominations. An additional \$500,000 was awarded in FY 2015 to 9 additional projects and additional funds will be awarded in FY 2016.

Expanding our ability to preserve underrepresented historic places, the National Park Service was pleased that Congress appropriated \$8 million from the Historic Preservation Fund in Fiscal Year 2016 for the preservation of sites associated with civil rights and the African American experience. These grants will provide planning and bricks and mortar preservation assistance.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) have also benefited from the support of the Historic Preservation Fund. Since 1998, \$60 million has been appropriated from the HPF to preserve significant buildings, structures and sites on the campuses of HBCUs. Most recently, HPF funding allocated through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act supported preservation work on 21 HBCU campuses.

Historic resources are often in peril and not just because of the immense need for funding to rehabilitate them. When a natural disaster strikes, not only are communities battered, but cultural resources are damaged and threatened with demolition. In the past decade, appropriations have been made from the Historic Preservation Fund to aid in the repair and rehabilitation of historic resources after Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy.

Appropriations of \$50 million for Hurricane Sandy and \$53 million for Hurricane Katrina have supported nonprofits, local and state governments, and individuals in repairing close to 1,000 historic properties. These funds provided much-needed relief and support for a variety of historic sites, without which would have been lost and communities further damaged.

One of the most recognized federal/state partnerships supported through the Historic Preservation Fund is the federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program, which is administered by the National Park Service and the State Historic Preservation Offices. The program promotes the rehabilitation of historic buildings, while also promoting economic revitalization and reinvestment in places large and small across the country. The program has been instrumental in preserving historic places that give our cities, towns and rural communities their special character.

Projects certified through the program are eligible for a 20-percent federal tax credit, commonly referred to as the historic tax credit. In order to be eligible, the property owner must undertake the substantial rehabilitation of a historic building in a business or income-producing use, while maintaining its historic character. In Fiscal Year 2015, 870 completed historic rehabilitation projects were certified, leveraging over \$4.47 billion in private investment, and an additional 1,283 proposed projects were approved. According to the most recent Statistical Report and Analysis of the program¹ HPF grants have been responsible for \$73.8 billion in private investment through the program - which has, in turn, supported the rehabilitation of more than 40,000 historic buildings and created almost 2.5 million jobs. During Fiscal Year 2014, states and tribes reviewed and commented on approximately 158,000 federal undertakings across the

¹<http://www.nps.gov/tps/tax-incentives/taxdocs/tax-incentives-2014statistical.pdf>

country. States also reviewed plans for \$3.9 billion in private investment through the HPTC. From Main Streets to central cities, the program has consistently been a strong catalyst for job creation and economic growth while encouraging reinvestment in underutilized historic buildings and new uses for vacant and deteriorated ones

The projects and programs funded by the Historic Preservation Fund are highly cost-effective and leverage private investment while supporting the legislation outlined 50 years ago by the National Historic Preservation Act, the cornerstone of our nation's public policy on historic preservation. The Historic Preservation Fund's reauthorization is essential to continue the national historic preservation partnership program at the federal, state, tribal, and local levels, and continue to preserve our shared national history for all Americans, current and future.

This bill would address the most pressing issue of reauthorization of the Historic Preservation Fund and we urge the committee to move legislation forward as soon as possible, since deposits into the fund have already ceased, endangering the programs created to preserve our national history.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my statement. I would be pleased to respond to any questions you and other members of the subcommittee may have regarding this bill.