

Hon. Aimee K. Jorjani
Chairman

Leonard A. Forsman
Vice Chairman

John M. Fowler
Executive Director



Preserving America's Heritage

August 5, 2019

The Honorable Deb Haaland
Chairman
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests,
and Public Lands
House Natural Resources Committee
Longworth House Office Building, 1328
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Don Young
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests,
and Public Lands
House Natural Resources Committee
Longworth House Office Building, 1328
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Haaland and Representative Young:

The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) would like to express its support for the National Heritage Area Act (H.R. 1049). Established by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the ACHP is the independent federal agency charged with advising the President and Congress on matters relating to historic preservation. The ACHP members voted at their July 10 business meeting (with federal members abstaining) to support this legislation.

The bill would provide a formal program structure for the current ad hoc system of congressional designation and oversight of National Heritage Areas. As you know, Congress has authorized 55 National Heritage Areas in 34 states, including six new areas designated this March. There also are a number of National Heritage Area feasibility studies in process. While the National Park Service (NPS) manages funding and administration of National Heritage Areas through its Heritage Partnership Program, the bill would create a codified National Heritage Area system with national standards and processes for feasibility studies, designations, and heritage area management plans.

At your April 30 Subcommittee hearing, NPS testified that it supports establishing a statutory framework for the National Heritage Area program. However, NPS asked that the Subcommittee defer action in order to give the agency an opportunity to work with you on revisions. Specific needed amendments were not cited, but the testimony noted ongoing issues of funding equity among National Heritage Areas and questions regarding the intent of congressional funding caps. If discussions are not already ongoing, the ACHP urges the Subcommittee to work with NPS to address operational concerns raised in the agency's testimony and then report favorably on H.R. 1049. The legislation would bring increased predictability and consistency to an important program that helps local communities to preserve and promote their historic resources.

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION

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Please feel free to contact us if the ACHP can answer any questions regarding our support for this bill or if the ACHP can be of any further assistance. Our executive director, John Fowler, may be reached at (202) 517-0200.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Aimee Jorjani". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A' and a long, sweeping tail.

Aimee Jorjani
Chairman