

Hon. Aimee K. Jorjani
Chairman

Rick Gonzalez, AIA
Vice Chairman

John M. Fowler
Executive Director



July 24, 2020

The Honorable Deb Haaland
Chairman
Subcommittee on National Parks,
Forests and Public Lands
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Don Young
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on National Parks,
Forests and Public Lands
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Haaland and Ranking Member Young:

As chairman of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), I was very interested in the Subcommittee's virtual forum on July 7, 2020, "The Restoration Economy: Examining Environmental and Economic Opportunities." 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 recent forum focused principally on natural resources conservation; however, investing in cultural resources preservation also offers a huge opportunity to bolster the economy, particularly through traditional trades training. Repurposing and restoring the already built environment has created an economic sector also known as "restorative development." Within the historic preservation field, it is a natural evolution to maintain or re-adapt a building, already possessing embodied energy, as the ultimate form of recycling, while offering endless possibilities for career paths. Likewise, planners and preservationists are keenly aware of the key interconnectedness of the built and natural environment.

Restoration work on historic buildings cannot be done without skilled workers in the traditional trades and construction fields; however, there is a shortage of such workers. Investing in opportunities for people—notably youth and veterans—to acquire marketable knowledge, skills, and abilities in the traditional trades would help to put people to work while helping to ensure that precious historic resources are preserved for future generations. In response, I have formed an ACHP Traditional Trades Training Task Force comprised of experts in the restoration trades field, to explore how the federal government can help promote this outcome. (More about the Task Force and its members is available at <https://www.achp.gov/initiatives/traditional-trades-training>.)

Academic programs, apprenticeships, service corps work, and volunteer immersion programs all can offer pathways into the traditional trades. This makes traditional trades training well suited to engaging diverse groups in local communities in learning new skills while working to preserve their community's historic character, with lasting effects on livability and affordability as an alternative to new and costly construction. Helping people acquire these specialized skills can fill jobs and change lives.

Traditional trades training also could help to maximize the impact of the Great American Outdoors Act. The Department of the Interior and the U.S. Forest Service will be spending millions of dollars under the

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bill to address properties suffering from deferred maintenance, many of which are historic. A shortage of trained crafts people in the traditional trades could complicate this important effort.

As the Subcommittee continues to explore the role that investing in the environment can play in immediate economic recovery and long-term economic prosperity, the ACHP and the Traditional Trades Training Task Force would welcome an opportunity to further discuss how traditional trades training might contribute to those goals.

Sincerely, .



Aimee K. Jorjani
Chairman