

Jordan E. Tannenbaum
Vice Chairman

Reid J. Nelson
Executive Director, Acting



April 20, 2022

The Honorable Raúl M. Grijalva
Chairman
House Natural Resources Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bruce Westerman
Ranking Member
House Natural Resources Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Grijalva and Ranking Member Westerman:

Acting as chairman of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) during that position's current vacancy, I am writing to express the ACHP's support for the Historic Preservation Enhancement Act (H.R. 6589). 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 proposed bill would permanently authorize funding for the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF), ensure that full funding is available to be expended each year, and increase its annual funding level.

As you know, the HPF is foundational to the national historic preservation program, providing annual funding to support the work of State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPOs) and Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs). Such work forms the backbone of preservation activity in the nation, including conducting surveys of historic properties; preparing nominations to the National Register of Historic Places; assisting federal agencies in reviewing the historic preservation impacts of federal projects in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act; assisting in federal Historic Tax Credit project reviews; implementing disaster recovery grants; and conducting preservation education and planning.

The HPF also is a major source of funding for competitive preservation grant programs. Through such programs, Congress directs funds to address timely and pressing preservation needs. In FY 2022, HPF grant programs include the following: Underrepresented Communities Grants; Save America's Treasures Grants; African American Civil Rights Grants; Historically Black Colleges and Universities Grants; Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grants; Semiquincentennial Grants; and History of Equal Rights Grants.

Annually, \$150 million in annual Outer Continental Shelf revenue from oil and gas leases is deposited into the HPF. However, until very recently, far less than \$150 million per year has been appropriated. According to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, only \$2.5 billion has been spent from the HPF out of the \$6.3 billion that has been deposited into the fund since 1980. Unpredictable and often insufficient funding from year to year has impacted the ability of SHPOs and THPOs to plan for and fulfill their responsibilities under the NHPA, including assisting federal agencies during the Section 106 review process for federal projects. The fact that the HPF must be periodically reauthorized adds a further layer of uncertainty. Since the law's current authorization will expire at the end of FY 2023, it is an opportune time to provide predictability and certainty for the HPF through full and permanent funding, as called for in the Historic Preservation Enhancement Act.

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION

401 F Street NW, Suite 308 • Washington, DC 20001-2637
Phone: 202-517-0200 • Fax: 202-517-6381 • achp@achp.gov • www.achp.gov

The proposed bill also would double the amount deposited annually in the HPF from \$150 million to \$300 million. This is in keeping with recent Congressional and Administration support for allocating more than \$150 million annually. The President's Budgets for both FY 2022 and FY 2023 have called for slightly above \$150 million for the HPF, and Congress appropriated \$173.072 million for FY 2022.

Further increasing funding for the HPF would help preserve more of the historic places that Americans care deeply about. There would be more opportunities for competitive grant funding, but also for capacity building for SHPOs and THPOs, which is critically important. Now and in coming years, the anticipated influx of federal projects to address critical issues such as energy development and infrastructure permitting, disaster planning and resilience, and climate change adaptation would benefit from SHPO and THPO funding levels sufficient to ensure their effective participation in the planning and review of such projects.

Please feel free to contact me if the ACHP can be of any assistance during further consideration of the Historic Preservation Enhancement Act, or your staff may wish to follow up with acting ACHP Executive Director Reid Nelson at nelson@achp.gov. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jordan E. Tannenbaum". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Jordan E. Tannenbaum
Vice Chairman