

Hon. Sara C. Bronin
Chair

Jordan E. Tannenbaum
Vice Chairman

Reid J. Nelson
Executive Director



August 14, 2024

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair, Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Capitol Building, S-128
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Capitol Building, S-128
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chair, Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Capitol Building, H-307
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa Luisa DeLauro
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Capitol Building, H-307
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Murray, Chair Cole, Ranking Member Collins, and Ranking Member DeLauro:

The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) would like to take this opportunity to provide comments on the Senate and House versions of the Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act (S. 4802/H.R. 8998) as they pertain to funding for the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) and the African-American Burial Grounds Preservation Program. The ACHP is the independent federal agency that is charged with advising the President and Congress on historic preservation matters and with overseeing review of federal projects under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

The ACHP offers the following advice to the Appropriations Committees for consideration during negotiations on final appropriations for FY 2025.

- **The ACHP urges Congress to support an increase in HPF appropriations in FY 2025—preferably to at least \$225 million—and inclusion of at least a two-year reauthorization of the HPF, pending separate legislation to address long-term reauthorization.**

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 Section 106 reviews of federal projects; 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 that directly support the preservation of a wide variety of historic places in communities across the nation. In FY 2024, HPF grant programs include the following: Underrepresented Communities Grants; Save America's Treasures Grants; African American Civil Rights Grants; Historically Black Colleges and

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

Universities Grants; Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grants; Semiquincentennial Grants; and History of Equal Rights Grants.

Increasing HPF appropriations in FY 2025 would assist in the preservation of important historic places and allow much needed capacity building for SHPOs and THPOs. Anticipated increases in the number of environmental reviews for federal projects designed to address the nation's critical needs regarding energy development and infrastructure permitting, disaster planning and resilience, and climate change adaptation will further stretch the capacity of SHPOs and THPOs, who have seen only incremental increases in the past. Since the number of THPOs can grow each year (depending upon what Tribes successfully seek approval of their preservation programs by the National Park Service), ensuring adequate HPF funding for their work is a particularly acute need.

Preservation advocates, including the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers and the National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers, estimate that at least \$225 million in HPF funding is needed in FY 2025, with \$70 million going to SHPOs and \$34 million to THPOs. Given this, the ACHP urges that HPF appropriations equal at least \$225 million in the final FY 2025 appropriations legislation.

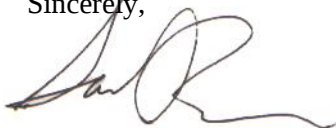
Regarding reauthorization of the HPF, the fund's previous 10-year authorization expired at the end of FY 2023 and was extended for one year in appropriations legislation for FY 2024. Both the House and Senate versions of the Interior appropriations bill would extend authorization for another year. The ACHP urges that this provision be included in the final appropriations bill but recommends that this temporary reauthorization be extended to at least two years. This would provide additional stability and predictability pending passage of legislation to address long-term reauthorization.

- **The ACHP urges Congress to fully fund the African-American Burial Grounds Preservation Program at \$3 million under the National Park Service National Recreation and Preservation account of the National Park Service.**

Development of the FY 2025 budget also provides an opportunity to provide initial funding for the National Park Service's African-American Burial Grounds Preservation Program, which was created in FY 2023 but has not yet been funded. As noted in the [ACHP's 2023 Policy Statement on Burial Sites, Human Remains, and Funerary Objects](#), the burial sites, human remains, and funerary objects of certain groups of people have a higher probability of being unmarked and undocumented and thus more likely to be affected by development projects. This is the case for Indian Tribes, Native Hawaiians, and other Indigenous Peoples, and also for enslaved Africans and their descendants. The African-American Burial Grounds Preservation Program was created to help address this issue. The program is authorized to receive up to \$3 million annually, and the ACHP urges Congress to provide full funding in FY 2025 to launch this important new program.

Please feel free to contact me to discuss this matter; I would be happy to have the opportunity to meet with you or your staff. In addition, your staff may wish to follow up with Executive Director Reid Nelson at rnelson@achp.gov. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Sara C. Bronin
Chair