

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 26, 2015

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman
Interior, Environment & Related Agencies
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515

The Honorable Tom Udall
Ranking Member
Interior, Environment & Related Agencies
125 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall:

We write requesting that you support economic development, job creation, and our national heritage by appropriating \$89.1 million in funding for the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) for Fiscal Year 2016, as recommended in the President's Fiscal Year 2016 budget proposal. Of the total request, \$46.925 million is for State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs), \$9.985 million is for Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPOs), and \$500,000 is for grants to underserved communities. In addition, this request includes \$30 million for the Civil Rights competitive grants initiative and \$2.5 million for competitive grants for Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Tying all of our Nation's historic preservation programs together are the SHPOs and THPOs. SHPOs carry out the National Historic Preservation Act which provides citizens the tools they need to revitalize, rehabilitate, and protect the places that give meaning to America. Funding for SHPOs leverages investments through local jobs, non-federal contributions and long-term economic development. In 2014, the Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit, administered by SHPOs, leveraged more than \$4.32 billion in private investment and over the life of the program, has created 2.4 million jobs. In 2014, SHPOs also reviewed more than 103,000 federal undertakings for their impact on historic resources and surveyed more than 16.5 million acres for cultural resources.

THPOs carry-out many of the same functions as SHPOs in tribal areas. There are now 154 THPOs, compared to only 12 in FY1996 when the program was first funded. Unfortunately, the amount of HPF funds appropriated is not keeping pace with this expansion. The addition of new THPOs each year keeps the average level of support per THPO suppressed at around \$60,000, barely enough to operate a program. With the anticipated increase in the number of THPOs in 2015, the additional \$1 million will result in keeping THPOs at their current funding level.

Funding these core and essential historic preservation programs represents a true investment in America's treasured legacy multiplied many times over through public-private partnerships that benefit economic development in areas across the country. Most importantly, this important federal investment would create much needed jobs and ensure the protection of historic resources nationwide that might otherwise be lost forever.

Sincerely,



Kirsten Gillibrand



Ben Card

Devin Dunbar

Mark R. Womers

Wm F. B. A

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Rebecca Stetson

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Jack Reed

Tommy Baldwin

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Richard Blumenthal