



**National Trust for  
Historic Preservation**

*Save the past. Enrich the future.*

January 25, 2019

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski  
Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Joe Manchin  
Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Manchin,

We write to thank you for your committee's leadership and collaboration on development of the Natural Resources Management Act (S. 47). The bipartisan efforts of you and your staff produced a legislative package that, if enacted, would provide much needed protection for many of our nation's important cultural and historic resources.

### **Interests of the National Trust for Historic Preservation**

The National Trust for Historic Preservation is a privately-funded charitable, educational and nonprofit organization chartered by Congress in 1949 in order to "facilitate public participation in historic preservation" and to further the purposes of federal historic preservation laws.<sup>1</sup> The intent of Congress was for the National Trust "to mobilize and coordinate public interest, participation and resources in the preservation and interpretation of sites and buildings."<sup>2</sup> With headquarters in Washington, D.C., nine field offices, 27 historic sites, more than one million members and supporters and a national network of partners in states, territories, and the District of Columbia, the National Trust works to save America's historic places and advocates for historic preservation as a fundamental value in programs and policies at all levels of government.

### **Historic Preservation Priorities**

The National Trust is pleased to see several important historic preservation priorities highlighted in the Natural Resources Management Act, and we enthusiastically endorse several provisions, including:

#### Ocmulgee Mounds National Historical Park Boundary Act

The legislation included in this package would re-designate the Ocmulgee National Monument as the Ocmulgee Mounds National Historical Park, adjust the park boundaries, and provide for a resource study to evaluate archaeological resources and Muscogee (Creek) heritage sites along the river. The Ocmulgee National Monument protects, in part, large earthen mounds constructed between A.D. 900 and A.D. 1650 and rich wildlife and recreation resources while telling the story of the nation's early frontier history. This proposal has bipartisan support and passed the House in multiple Congresses.

#### Reconstruction Era National Historical Park Act

This bill, which passed the House unanimously in September, would re-designate and expand the Reconstruction Era National Monument and establish the Reconstruction Era National Historic Network. The Reconstruction Era National Monument commemorates the stories of African

<sup>1</sup> 54 U.S.C. §§ 312102(a), 320101.

<sup>2</sup> S. Rep. No. 1110, 81st Cong., 1st Sess. 4 (1949).

Americans in the South immediately following the Civil War and in addition to the re-designation of the monument as a national historical park, this legislation includes authority for park boundary adjustments or expansions within the Beaufort National Historic Landmark District on St. Helena Island and at the Camp Saxton Site in Port Royal.

It would also establish a network comprised of existing units and programs of the NPS related to the history of the Reconstruction Era, as well as the properties and programs of other federal, state, local, and private entities that would apply to join the network. This concept has been utilized in the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom and the African American Civil Rights Network.

#### Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Historic Preservation Program

A provision in this package would reauthorize the HBCU Historic Preservation Program, which funds preservation work at HBCU campuses. Enactment of this legislation would catalyze much-needed rehabilitation work to preserve the legacy of historic sites in HBCUs and vital pieces of the African American story. This legislation passed the House unanimously in June 2017.

#### Land and Water Conservation Fund

Included in the package is a provision to permanently reauthorize the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Since its inception in 1965, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) has been a proven, effective, and flexible tool for saving places with important cultural and historic significance. LWCF has invested more than \$550 million to add specifically to our nation's historic and cultural parks managed by the National Park Service, and many millions more to add lands to our national parks and other public lands that tell diverse stories of our nation's history.

We have also shared our support for the provisions related to the Shiloh National Military Park, Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park, and Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home in previous testimony to this committee.

#### **Additional Priorities**

While this comprehensive legislation includes many worthy provisions, we look forward to working with you to address two vital issues not addressed by S. 47, specifically the need for dedicated funding to address the almost \$12 billion National Park Service deferred maintenance backlog and the designation of Route 66 as a National Historic Trail. In the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress, both of these important issues were the subject of bipartisan, bicameral legislation and multiple favorable hearings in House and Senate committees.

The National Trust is committed to working with you to secure passage of the legislative package and continue our shared work to ensure preservation of cultural and historic resources on public lands.

Thank you for your commitment to these important issues.

Sincerely,



Pam Bowman  
Director of Public Lands Policy  
National Trust for Historic Preservation