June 5, 2018

Dear Members of the House of Representatives:

We appreciate this opportunity to share our support for H.R. 801, the Route 66 National Historic Trail Designation Act, which is scheduled for House floor consideration today. The National Trust enthusiastically endorses this legislation and looks forward to its enactment this year.

**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 to “facilitate public participation in historic preservation” and to further the purposes of federal historic preservation laws. 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.” 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.

**H.R. 801, Route 66 National Historic Trail Designation Act**

We appreciate Representative Darin LaHood’s leadership on this legislation to designate Route 66 as a National Historic Trail. Historic Route 66 stretches approximately 2,400 miles from Chicago, IL to Los Angeles, CA, passing through eight states and more than 300 communities. This vital transportation corridor between the Midwest and southern California has endured as a symbol of freedom and mobility while epitomizing a new optimism that pervaded the nation’s economic recovery following World War II.

Route 66 was found by the National Park Service (NPS) to be nationally significant in its 1995 *Route 66 Special Resource Study,* which determined that Route 66 met the eligibility requirements for a National Historic Trail. Numerous buildings along Route 66 are listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), and a 2012 Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) establishing the road’s national significance was recently approved by the Keeper of the National Register. Route 66 has been designated a National Scenic Byway in four states, including one segment that has been designated an All-American Road—the highest designation offered by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

Route 66 is internationally recognized as representing America’s love of the automobile and open road. As a Dustbowl migration route, a World War II strategic military route, and a vacation travel route, it has been celebrated in music, literature, television, movies, and popular lore. The National Trust has been supportive of Route 66 preservation efforts for many years, participating in symposiums, providing strategic assistance to organizations, and listing Historic Route 66 Motels on our 2007 list of America’s 11 Most Endangered Historic Places.

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When Congress passed the Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program in 1999, a program administered by the National Park Service (NPS), Route 66 was described as a symbol of the American people's heritage of travel and their legacy of seeking a better life. Unfortunately, this program is scheduled to sunset in 2019, making the passage of H.R. 801 and historic trail designation vital to highlighting the national significance of Route 66, the idiosyncratic culture of independent businesses, kitschy roadside architecture, and unique attractions associated with the route.

We urge your support for this legislation and look forward to working with you to ensure the enactment of H.R 801 this year. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions. I can be reached at pbowman@savingplaces.org.

Sincerely,

Pam Bowman

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