



**National Trust for
Historic Preservation**
Save the past. Enrich the future.

May 22, 2017

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chair
Interior Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Chair
Subcommittee on
Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Udall
Ranking Minority Member
Interior Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Ranking Minority Member
Subcommittee on
Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Murkowski, Chair Calvert, and Ranking Members Udall and McCollum:

As nonprofit organizations, businesses, and historians who support historic preservation, we urge you to work with us to protect our national parks well into the future and, in particular, to support guaranteed funding for repair needs.

This year marks the 100th birthday of the National Park Service (NPS), which oversees 413 natural and cultural areas in all 50 states and most U.S. territories. The National Park System tells the story of remarkable people and events in our nation's rich history at sites as diverse as Gettysburg National Military Park, Independence Hall, the Statue of Liberty, the Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site, and Native American cultural sites like Mesa Verde National Park.

NPS faces a growing challenge in adequately maintaining its sites to ensure that visitors can experience the parks' natural beauty and learn about our nation's history. After decades of underfunding, NPS has an infrastructure repair backlog estimated at \$12 billion (FY 2015), of which over \$3 billion is attributed to historic, non-transportation related structures and sites. Some of the National Park Service's most significant historic sites are at risk of falling into disrepair. For example, the Statue of Liberty National Monument in New York Harbor, which includes Ellis Island—an iconic symbol of American freedom and immigration—has repair needs of over \$160 million.

Historic and cultural sites in the National Park System are testaments to our citizens' valor, our hardships, our victories, and our American traditions. Deferred maintenance in our national parks puts historic sites at risk of permanent damage or loss. In an April 2016 survey about the National Park System conducted by Public Opinion Strategies/The Pew Charitable Trusts, 44 percent of respondents ranked preservation of historic and cultural sites and monuments as their top priority for repair in the national parks, higher than any other category of infrastructure repair need.

A reliable, dedicated federal funding source to address the deferred maintenance backlog ensures that we preserve historic buildings, sites, and necessary infrastructure in safe condition, and that parks remain open and accessible so that the public can continue to learn from and experience the stories that tell our nation's history. Our National Park System celebrates our historic and natural treasures, and we have a responsibility to ensure our parks are maintained and preserved so future generations can continue to enjoy and learn from them.

Sincerely,

6th Cavalry Museum (GA)
Alliance for Historic Landscape Preservation
Archeology Southwest
Arizona Downtown Alliance
Arizona Heritage Alliance
Arizona Preservation Foundation
Arizona Vintage Sign Coalition
Baltimore Heritage, Inc.
Boston Preservation Alliance
California Preservation Foundation
Cherokee County Historical Society (GA)
Cleveland Restoration Society
Colorado Preservation, Inc.
Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation
Dade Heritage Trust (FL)
DC Preservation League
Florida Trust for Historic Preservation
Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation
Greater Portland Landmarks
Guam Preservation Trust
The Heritage Foundation of Franklin & Williamson
County (TN)
Heritage Ohio, Inc.
Historic Boston Incorporated
Historic Charleston Foundation
Historic Columbus Foundation
Historic Hawai'i Foundation
Historic Kansas City Foundation
Historic Madison, Inc. (IN)
Historic Routt County (CO)
Historic Salisbury Foundation, Inc. (NC)
Historic Savannah Foundation
Historic Seattle
Indiana Landmarks
Lakewood Alive (OH)
Landmarks Illinois
Landmark Society of Western New York
Lincoln Park Preservation Alliance
Los Alamos Historical Society
Los Angeles Conservancy
Louisiana Landmarks Society
Louisiana Trust for Historic Preservation
Maine Preservation
Michigan Historic Preservation Network
Michigan Young Preservationists
Milwaukee Preservation Alliance
Mississippi Heritage Trust
Missouri Alliance for Historic Preservation
Modern Phoenix LLC
Montana Preservation Alliance
National Alliance of Preservation Commissions
National Barn Alliance
National Conference of State Historic
Preservation Officers
National Trust for Historic Preservation
Neighborhood Associations for Presidio Planning

Nevada Preservation Foundation
Oberlin Heritage Center
Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation
Preserve Arkansas
Preserve Louisiana
Preserve Phoenix
Preserve Rhode Island
Preservation Action
Preservation Cincinnati
Preservation Dallas
Preservation Detroit
Preservation Action Council of San Jose (CA)
Preservation League of New York State
Preservation Alliance of West Virginia
Preservation Delaware
Preservation Durham
Preservation Kentucky
Preservation Massachusetts
Preservation Maryland
Preservation Pennsylvania
Preservation Resource Center of New Orleans
Preservation Society of Asheville & Buncombe
County (NC)
Preservation Society of Charleston
Preservation Trust of Vermont
Preservation Utah
Preservation Virginia
Providence Preservation Society
Quinn Evans Architects (MI)
Restore Oregon
Riverside Avondale Preservation
San Francisco Heritage
Save Our Heritage Organisation (CA)
Spokane Preservation Advocates
The Vail Preservation Society (AZ)
Washington Trust for Historic Preservation