



## SOCIETY FOR AMERICAN ARCHAEOLOGY

December 5, 2022

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Chair, Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Vice Chair, Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Chair, Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Chair Leahy, Vice Chair Shelby, Chair DeLauro, and Ranking Member Granger:

The Society for American Archaeology (SAA) reminds you of the crucial importance of fully funding the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) in the final FY 2023 appropriations Interior-Environment legislation. Given the recent passage of infrastructure-related measures, cultural and historic preservation programs must receive enough support in order to conserve those resources for future generations and support these important improvements to our infrastructure. We respectfully request that you approve \$191 million for the HPF, which is the level outlined in the Chairman's Mark in the Senate version of the Interior spending bill.

The SAA is an international organization that, since its founding in 1934, has been dedicated to research about and interpretation and protection of the archaeological heritage of the Americas. With more than 5,500 members, the SAA represents professional and avocational archaeologists, archaeology students in colleges and universities, and archaeologists working at tribal agencies, museums, government agencies, and the private sector. The SAA has members throughout the United States, as well as in many nations around the world.

The HPF provides the means by which most of the nation's historic preservation work occurs. We appreciate the funding increases Congress has provided to the HPF in recent years, including the FY 2022 enacted level of \$173.072 million, an increase of \$29 million over the 2021 appropriation. Nevertheless, we must point out that most of the additional funding has not gone to the lynchpins of American preservation: the State (SHPO) and Tribal (THPO) Historic Preservation Offices. SHPOs received only a \$2 million increase in FY 2022, and THPOs fared worse (\$1 million), even though seven new THPO offices were established this year, bringing the total number of THPOs that will receive funds to 217. These increases do not account for the erosion of spending power due to inflation, much less the increased workload from recent legislation. Without adequate funding for these agencies, states and tribes cannot effectively and

efficiently carry out the compliance process established by the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). These offices perform the Section 106 consultations for federal undertakings that constitute the “front line” in the effort to preserve our cultural heritage, and the demands on their limited resources are great. In Washington State alone, the SHPO archaeologist reviewed more than 4,000 undertakings in 2021. Due to inadequate funding, most state offices can only employ one archaeologist to conduct thousands of reviews. With the enactment of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act, and the subsequent authorization of numerous infrastructure projects, the Section 106 workload of the SHPOs and THPOs has grown and will continue to do so. In addition, THPOs and SHPOs have other duties, including repatriation activities and economic development initiatives.

THPOs face an especially concerning shortfall. In 2021, 210 offices labored under an insufficient average of approximately \$75,000 per office; that quotient will shrink for 2022 because of the new offices established this year and will continue to decline in the future without additional funding as more tribes establish THPOs. Despite having less resources, THPOs are facing increasing workloads given their engagement in extensive government-to-government consultations, on top of their other NHPA responsibilities.

While recent increases in the HPF have facilitated innovative and impactful historic preservation work across the country, the adoption of infrastructure legislation requires additional appropriations to effectively tell and preserve the full American story for generations to come, while insuring that important federally funded projects move forward in a timely manner. Sufficient funding for SHPOs and THPOs will greatly improve and expedite the cultural resource review process.

The SAA joins other preservation groups in urging you to approve HPF funding of \$191 million in the final FY 2023 appropriations package, with \$65 million directed to the SHPOs and \$34 million to the THPOs. This will go a long way toward maximizing the effectiveness of the federal preservation system.

Thank you for considering our request. We stand ready to assist in any way to support our recommendations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Daniel H. Sandweiss', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Daniel H. Sandweiss, PhD, RPA  
President