



February 11, 2021

The Honorable Joe Manchin
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Barrasso
Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Manchin and Ranking Member Barrasso:

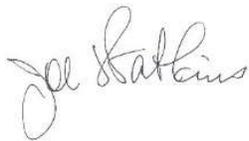
The Society for American Archaeology (SAA), the National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (NATHPO), the American Cultural Resources Association (ACRA), and the American Anthropological Association (AAA), strongly recommend your committee's approval of the nomination of Representative Deb Haaland to be the next Secretary of the Interior. We believe she is not only well-qualified for the position, but will also bring a new and much-needed focus to the Department (DOI) on the importance of cultural resources preservation, and honoring the nation's government-to-government obligations to consult with Indian Tribes.

Together, our organizations represent tens of thousands of archaeologists, Tribal Historic Preservation Officers, State Historic Preservation Officers and State Archaeologists, and cultural resource management specialists, who work every day with the DOI under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and other statutes to locate, identify, and preserve archaeological and other historic resources for present and future generations. We are confident that Rep. Haaland, with her tireless efforts in New Mexico and Washington on behalf of her constituents and the nation's natural and cultural heritage, will make an exemplary Secretary of the Interior.

Her nomination comes at a critical time. In recent years, a large number of regulatory changes and executive actions have been taken that was designed to dramatically weaken federal protections for our irreplaceable cultural legacies. As Interior Secretary, Rep. Haaland will play a crucial role in restoring these policies to full effectiveness. In addition, with her background as an enrolled member of the Laguna Pueblo, she will at last bring to the office of the Secretary a much-needed perspective regarding Interior's working relationships with the Tribal Nations. Far too often the Department's agencies have neglected this aspect of their operations. One example of this is their record of cursory or even non-existent consultations with tribal entities over federally-sponsored undertakings, even though such consultations are required by the NHPA or the National Environmental Policy Act. Secretary Haaland will ensure that the DOI fulfils its legal requirements to the federally-recognized tribal governments.

We urge your committee to consider and approve Rep. Haaland's nomination, and send it to the full Senate, as quickly as possible. Thank you for your time and consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,



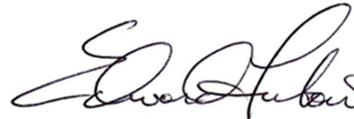
Joe E. Watkins, Ph.D., RPA
President, SAA



Valerie J. Grussing, PhD
Executive Director, NATHPO



Nathan Boyless
President, ACRA



Ed Liebow
Executive Director, AAA

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 nearly 7,000 members, 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. SAA has members throughout the U.S., as well as in many nations around the world.

NATHPO is a non-profit membership organization that empowers tribal preservation leaders to protect culturally important places that perpetuate Native identity, resilience, and cultural endurance. Connections to cultural heritage sustain the health and vitality of Native peoples.

ACRA is the national trade association supporting and promoting the common interests of cultural resource management (CRM) firms of all sizes, types and specialties. Today, our member firms undertake much of the legally mandated CRM studies and investigations in the United States.

The American Anthropological Association, dedicated to advancing human understanding and addressing the world's most pressing problems since its founding in 1902, is the world's largest professional anthropology organization.