



July 9, 2015

Commission on Government Forecasting and Accountability
ATTN: Facility Closure
703 Stratton Building
Springfield, IL 62706

re: Closure of Illinois State Museum

To Whom It May Concern:

As President of the Society for American Archaeology, I write to submit written testimony on behalf of our nearly 8000 members to urge that the Illinois State Museum not be closed.

SAA is an international organization that, since its founding in 1934, has been dedicated to the research about and interpretation and protection of the archaeological heritage of the Americas. With nearly 8,000 members, SAA represents professional archaeologists in colleges and universities, museums, government agencies, and the private sector. SAA has members in all 50 states as well as many other nations around the world.

Let me outline SAA's reasons for opposing any such budgetary actions. First, a closure, as demonstrated by the State's own Office of Tourism estimates of visitor spending, would be penny-wise and pound-foolish, as it actually makes money for the State.

Second, the Illinois State Museum's nationally renowned collections are a key resource for archaeological and wildlife scholars and management professionals from the entire upper Midwest, for assessing the long-term histories of people and plant and animal communities in the region—an especially valuable resource in a time of heightened climate variability.

Third, and most important, closure of such a public educational institution and its associated facilities such as Dickson Mounds would deprive the people of the State of Illinois of their history. The Illinois State Museum hosts nearly half a million visitors a year. Respect for natural and cultural heritage comes from knowledge of it. No other public or private institution in Illinois conveys to its citizens a sense of the natural and human history to which they are heirs.

For all these reasons, we urge the Commission affirm the financial, research, and educational value of the Illinois State Museum and refuse to support its closure or other forms of budgetary compromise.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Diane Gifford-Gonzalez". The signature is written in a cursive style with some loops and flourishes.

Diane Gifford-Gonzalez
President