



March 1, 2013

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

The Society for American Archaeology (SAA) congratulates you on your appointment of Dr. Lynne Sebastian to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP). Her service as an expert member will greatly assist the panel in its mission of protecting the nation's extensive and multi-faceted cultural heritage.

SAA is an international organization that, since its founding in 1934, has been dedicated to the interpretation and protection of the archaeological heritage of the Americas. With more than 7,000 members, SAA represents professional archaeologists in colleges and universities, museums, government agencies, and the private sector as well as avocational archaeologists and interested members of the public. SAA has members in all 50 states as well as many other nations around the world.

Dr. Sebastian is a former president of SAA and the first president of the Society to come from the ranks of the historic preservation field. Her experience of more than 30 years includes serving as the State Historic Preservation Officer of New Mexico, helping establish the Summer Institute in Cultural Resource Management, working as a consultant on some of the most difficult and intractable historic preservation projects in the country, and writing books and articles that guide best practices and innovations in the field.

Her appointment to the ACHP comes as our nation faces enormous challenges balancing historic preservation with resource development. The ACHP oversees the implementation of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). The importance of this law to the preservation of the nation's historic resources cannot be overstated. Section 106 of the Act requires federal project managers to take into account the impacts of their undertakings on historic properties and resources, and establishes a consultative review process to carry out that requirement. Weighing the public's interest in protecting its cultural and historical values with the needs of development is the cornerstone of the 106 process.

Since the statute's enactment in 1966, projects have been redesigned to avoid thousands of archaeological, historical, and cultural resources; significant resources that could not be avoided have been documented; affected communities, including Native Americans and other minority groups, have been empowered to be part of the decision making process; and the general public has benefited through an increased awareness of the past, educational opportunities, and accessibility to places of historic and cultural value.

The NHPA has evolved with practice and the needs of the country. It also exists in a political and social context. At the moment, there are strong voices challenging the regulation affecting resource development at all levels. The ACHP requires leaders that not only understand the importance of historic preservation, but also how to make historic preservation work in today's world. Dr. Sebastian is one such leader.

Dr. Sebastian's experience and expertise will make a strong and lasting contribution to the work of the ACHP. Again, we congratulate you on making this excellent appointment.

Sincerely,



William F. Limp, Ph.D.
President

CC: The Honorable Ron Wyden, Chairman, Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
The Honorable Lisa Murkowski, Ranking Member, Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
The Honorable Doc Hastings, Chairman, House Natural Resources Committee
The Honorable Edward J. Markey, Ranking Member, House Natural Resources Committee
M. Wayne Donaldson, Chairman, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation