



May 12, 2015

The Honorable John McCain
Chairman
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jack Reed
Ranking Member
Committee on Armed Services
United States Senate
228 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman McCain and Ranking Member Reed:

We, the undersigned organizations, wish to make you aware of an issue of great importance that concerns our members and the national defense. Specifically, we strongly oppose Section 2853 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) currently pending in the House of Representatives (H.R. 1735), and respectfully request that this or similar provisions be excluded from both the Senate version and the eventual conference agreement of the NDAA.

Section 2853 of H.R. 1735 would amend the National Historic Preservation Act to allow the head of any federal agency, for national security reasons, to prevent the designation of federal properties as National Historic Landmarks (NHL's), World Heritage Sites or as listings on the National Register of Historic Places (NR). Section 2853 would also enable Federal land managing agencies to remove Federal properties that are already on the National Register for reasons of national security.

Nearly identical language was included in the manager's amendment to the committee bill of the fiscal year 2015 House-passed version of the NDAA. Ultimately, this language was not included in the Senate version of the bill or in the final legislation. At the time, numerous preservation organizations—along with the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation—registered their opposition to that provision. Our objection is the same now as it was then—the proposed amendment is totally unnecessary. A listing on the National Register does not preclude any federal agency from upgrading, adding to, or even demolishing historic structures for any reason, including national security. Last year, both the National Park Service and DoD testified that in the nearly five decades of the National Register program, they were unaware of a single instance where a historic designation was perceived to have impaired military readiness or training.

Since the creation of the National Historic Preservation Act in 1966, the nation has successfully maintained and balanced the interests of national security with the long term preservation of the federal government's most important historic resources. Again, we strongly urge you to oppose this unnecessary provision and to contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,

American Cultural Resources Association (ACRA)

ACRA is the national trade association representing the interests of heritage management firms of all sizes, types and specialties. ACRA's member firms undertake much of the legally mandated heritage management studies and investigations in the United States. There are approximately 1,300 heritage management firms nationwide that employ over 10,000 heritage management professionals, including archaeologists, preservation architects, architectural historians, historians, and an increasingly diverse group of other specialists. These firms generate over \$1 billion in revenue annually. ACRA firms create and support jobs, providing employment for American-educated and trained professionals, and serve an important role in delivering responsible heritage management solutions for our communities that appropriately balance economic development and heritage preservation.

National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers (NCSHPO)

NCSHPO is the professional association of the State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPOs) who carry out the national historic preservation program as delegates of the Secretary of the Interior pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (NHPA) (16 USC 470). The NCSHPO acts as a communications vehicle among the SHPOs and their staffs and represents the SHPOs with federal agencies and national preservation organizations.

National Trust for Historic Preservation

The National Trust is a privately funded nonprofit organization chartered by Congress in 1949. We work to save America's historic places to enrich our future. With headquarters in Washington, D.C., 13 field offices, 27 historic sites, 746,000 members and supporters and partner organizations in 50 states, territories, and the District of Columbia, the National Trust works to save America's historic places and advocates for historic preservation as a fundamental value in programs and policies at all levels of government.

Society for American Archaeology (SAA)

The Society for American Archaeology (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 more than 7,700 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.

Society for Historical Archaeology (SHA)

With more than 2,300 members, the SHA is the largest organization in the world dedicated to the archaeological study of the modern world and the third largest anthropological organization in the United States. Most members are professional archaeologists who teach, work in museums or consulting firms, or have government posts. Through SHA's close relationship with the Advisory Council for Underwater Archaeology, our members also include many of the world's underwater archaeologists.