



SOCIETY FOR AMERICAN ARCHAEOLOGY



AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

Advancing Knowledge, Solving Human Problems



SOCIETY for HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

January 18, 2024

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chairwoman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Room S-128, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Susan Davis
Vice-Chairwoman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Room S-128, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kay Granger
Chairwoman
House Committee on Appropriations
H-307, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Murray, Vice-Chairwoman Davis, Chairwoman Granger, and Ranking Member DeLauro,

The undersigned organizations congratulate congressional leaders on arriving at top-line spending levels for the remainder of fiscal year 2024. Finalizing the outstanding appropriations measures will provide both critical funding and certainty for the nation’s cultural resources preservation programs.

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.

Founded in 1902, the American Anthropological Association, with 8,000 members, is the world’s largest scholarly and professional organization of anthropologists. The [Association](#) is

dedicated to advancing human understanding and applying this understanding to the world's most pressing problems.

The American Cultural Resources Association is the national network of professional firms and service partners representing the cultural resource management (CRM) industry and associated fields of study. [ACRA](#) members apply specialized research skills within a framework of federal, state, local, and/or tribal law and also facilitate an open dialogue where every stakeholder has a voice in order to help guide smart, sustainable economic development and safeguard important historic and cultural heritage assets.

The Archaeological Institute of America (AIA) is the world's oldest and largest archaeological organization. The [AIA](#) is a nonprofit founded in 1879 and chartered by the United States Congress in 1906. Our 200,000 members include enthusiasts, students, and avocational and professional archaeologists, all united by their passion for archaeology and its role in furthering human knowledge.

Formed in 1967, the Society for Historical Archaeology (SHA) is the largest scholarly group concerned with the archaeology of the modern world (AD 1400–present). The main focus of the society is the era since the beginning of European exploration. [SHA](#) promotes scholarly research and the dissemination of knowledge concerning historical archaeology. The society is specifically concerned with the identification, excavation, interpretation, and conservation of sites and materials on land and underwater.

The new top-line funding level of \$1.59 trillion, as set forth in last year's Fiscal Responsibility Act, will include \$704 billion for non-defense discretionary spending. We continue to believe that S. 2605, the Senate version of the FY 2024 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, will best protect our irreplaceable national heritage:

- The Senate bill proposes level spending of \$20.06 million for BLM's cultural resources program, avoiding substantial reductions that will harm the archaeological and cultural resources on BLM land.
- The NPS National Recreation and Preservation Cultural Programs (NRPC) provide vital technical assistance and other support for resource protection within National Parks and for other federal agencies, including for the proper care and management of archaeological resources under their control. We support the funding levels in S. 2605, which would include \$39.57 million for this account, a small increase over FY 2023.
- The Historic Preservation Fund is the mechanism that provides crucial support to State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs) and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPOs) and matching grants to nonprofits and local governments to preserve and document historic resources. While both S. 2605 and H.R. 4821 contain funding levels of \$62.15 million and \$23 million for SHPOs and THPOs, the Senate bill also contains a *provision extending the authorization of the HPF for another year*. This vital language will give Congress more time to act on legislation to reauthorize the HPF and will provide our members and others in the preservation community the certainty they need.
- Both bills include \$3.4 million for the National NAGPRA Grants program, the same as in FY 2023. This funding will allow Native Americans and museums to continue their efforts to document and, if so desired, repatriate sacred objects and human remains covered under NAGPRA.

- As the table below demonstrates, we are already facing a shortage of federal archaeologists, with too few people to carry out the tasks required for agencies to fully comply with federal preservation statutes. Reductions in funding, as called for in the House bill, will only exacerbate this situation.

Agency	Acreage	Archaeologists	Archaeologist per acre
BLM	244 million	217	1 archaeologist per 1.12 million acres
USFS	191 million	462	1 archaeologist per 413,420 acres
USFWS	89 million	22	1 archaeologist per 4.04 million acres
NPS	80 million	268	1 archaeologist per 298,507 acres
DOD	9 million*	305	1 archaeologist per 29,508 acres
Total	613 million	1,274	1 archaeologist per 481,162 acres

**domestic acreage only*

For these and other reasons, we urge appropriations negotiators to support the Senate funding levels for Interior, Environment and Related Agencies when drafting the final spending agreement for FY 2024.

Sincerely,

Society for American Archaeology

American Anthropological Association

American Cultural Resources Association

Archaeological Institute of America

Society for Historical Archaeology