



October 15, 2013

The Honorable Barack Obama  
President of the United States

The Honorable John Boehner  
Speaker of the House

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Senate Majority Leader

Dear President Barack Obama, House Speaker John Boehner, and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid

The Society for American Archaeology (SAA) respectfully requests an immediate end to the government shutdown. The closure of government agencies and offices has had a detrimental effect on the protection of our nation's historic resources because so many parts of the regulatory process depend on archaeologists and other heritage specialists who have been designated "non-essential" federal employees.

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 7,000 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.

About 1,500 archaeologists and cultural heritage specialists work for federal agencies. These individuals are critical to the proper enforcement of such laws as the National Historic Preservation Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act, the Archaeological Resources Protection Act, among others. The government shutdown has furloughed most archaeologists who work for government agencies and those that are working are not allowed to work on regulatory projects. As a result, public and private development projects throughout the United States are being disrupted. For example, the construction of solar arrays has been delayed because the Bureau of Land Management cannot review archaeological work plans. Furthermore, private development projects all across the country cannot proceed because the Army Corps of Engineers, Environmental Protection Agency, and other federal agencies cannot complete their obligations under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act to consider the impacts of federally licensed, permitted, and funded projects on historic resources. Government-to-government consultations with tribes regarding heritage issues are being hindered, endangering traditional places and sacred sites and delaying much needed infrastructure work on tribal lands. The jobs of more than 10,000 heritage specialists who work in the private sector as contractors on public

and private developments are at risk, as are the hundreds of thousands of jobs in the construction, mining, and energy industries that require compliance with federal laws protecting our environment and our heritage.

Enough is enough. Federal archaeologists who are out of work want to go back to work. Private sector archaeologists who have been laid off need to go back to work making sure that development does not proceed at the expense of our national heritage. We implore you to work with each other to immediately end the shutdown.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jeffrey A. Altschul". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Jeffrey Altschul, Ph.D., RPA  
President

CC: The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, House Democratic Leader  
The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Senate Minority Leader