September 13, 2022

The Honorable Raul Grijalva
Chairman
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bruce Westerman
Ranking Member
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Grijalva, Ranking Member Westerman, and members of the committee:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, representing millions of individuals and supporters across the country, we express our strong support for H.R. 6805, the African American Burial Grounds Preservation Act.

If enacted, this important legislation would authorize the National Park Service to establish a grant program, in coordination with governmental, private, and non-profit partners, to assist communities across our country in identifying, preserving, and restoring these historic and cultural sites.

Cemeteries are places of tribute and memory, connecting communities with their past. Unfortunately, many African-American burial grounds from both before and after the Civil War are in a state of disarray or inaccessibility. Beginning with slavery and continuing through the Jim Crow era, African-Americans were restricted in where they could bury their dead. Local laws segregated burial grounds by race. These sites were often confined to remote areas or marginal property, and they frequently were not provided the same sort of state or local support or assistance as predominantly white cemeteries. As a result, many jurisdictions are unaware of the existence of these historic sites. Even when their location is known, the task of restoring, preserving, and maintaining these burial grounds can be expensive, difficult, and require technical expertise.

Our organizations have witnessed first-hand the need for federal leadership to protect and preserve these important historic and cultural landmarks. The African-American Burial Grounds Preservation Program would help to re-discover the existence of burial grounds ahead of commercial development, avoiding disturbances which create heartache in communities and development delays. It will aid family members, descendants, and community members in honoring and remembering their shared past. Preserving and protecting these sacred sites, and the stories they tell, is an integral part of our American heritage.

The African-American Burial Grounds Preservation Act will help preserve our shared history while also better informing development decisions and community planning.

Sincerely,

National and Regional Organizations:
The 1772 Foundation, Inc.
Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society
America in Bloom
American Anthropological Association
American Battlefield Trust
American History Press
American Institute of Architects
American Society of Landscape Architects
Archaeological Centers Coalition
Archaeological Institute of America
Coalition for American Heritage
Dismantle Preservation
Fearnbach History Services
The Heritage Education Network
The Institute for Field Research
National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers
National Parks Conservation Association
The National Trust for Historic Preservation
New South Associates
Preservation Action
Sierra Club
Society for American Archaeology
Society of Black Archaeologists
Society for Historical Archaeology
United Negro College Fund

Heritage Association
Preservation African American Cemeteries, Inc.
(PAAC) Preservation African American Cemeteries Junior Preservation Society
Preserve Arkansas

California:
Save Our Heritage Organisation

Florida:
African American Burial Ground Project at University of South Florida
African American Cemetery Alliance of Tampa Bay
Black Cemetery Network
Florida International University
Florida Public Archaeology Network
Whispering Souls African American Cemetery

Alabama:
The Movement 46
The Ridge Macon County Archaeology Project
Tuskegee Macon County Community Foundation, Inc.

Alaska:
Preservation Alaska

Arizona:
Archaeological and Cultural Education Consultants, LLC
Arizona Preservation Foundation

Arkansas:
Afro-American Historical & Genealogical Society, Arkansas Chapter
Black Cemeteries Uncovered/African American Funeral Homes "The Final Emancipation"
Macedonia Baptist Cemetery & Church Preservation Project
Northwest Arkansas African American

Georgia:
Bethlehem Cemetery Society
Friends of Brooklyn Cemetery
Hamilton Hood Foundation
Saving Zuber Cemetery

Kentucky:
Association of Black Anthropologists
Preservation Kentucky, Inc.

Louisiana:
The Descendants Project

Maryland:
The Board of Trustees of Morningstar Tabernacle Number 88, Inc.
Broadneck African - American Heritage Project
Cabin John Citizens Association
Carderock Springs Citizens Association
The Community-Church Partnership Committee for the Mt. Zion AME Church Cemetery Rehabilitation
Friends of Moses Hall
Laurel Cemetery Memorial Project
Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture
Preservation Maryland

**Massachusetts:**
We Capture Carbon

**Michigan:**
Abre Croche Cultural Resources LLC
Commonwealth Heritage Group, Inc.
Michigan Historic Preservation Network
Preservation Detroit
Turner Restoration LLC

**Minnesota:**
Council for Minnesota Archaeology
Minnesota Archaeological Society

**Missouri:**
Center for Archaeological Research, Missouri State University
City of Weston, Historic Preservation Commission
Clay County African American Legacy Inc
Family and Friends of Shady Grove
Liberty African American Legacy Memorial
Missouri Preservation
Washington Park Cemetery - Anti-Desecration League

**Montana:**
The Extreme History Project

**New Jersey:**
Afro American Historical and Genealogical Society, Inc- NJ Chapter
The Archaeological Society of New Jersey Council for Northeast Historical Archaeology
Mount Peace Cemetery Association Inc
Pennington African Cemetery Association

**New York:**
Brooklyn Level Up

**Ohio:**
ARRC Inc./Stan Hywet Hall & Gardens
Cambridge Main Street
Cincinnati Preservation Association
Cleveland Restoration Society
Columbus Landmarks Foundation
Destination Downtown Lancaster
Downtown Cleveland Alliance
Green Lawn Cemetery Association
Heritage Ohio
Jewish Cemeteries of Greater Cincinnati
Main Street Kent
Mount Zion Baptist Church Preservation Society
Oberlin Heritage Center
Ohio Archaeological Council
Ohio History Connection
Ohio Museums Association
Paul R. Sullivan AIA LLC
Peninsula Foundation
Preservation Ohio
Richland Preservation Action
Robert Colby Consulting
Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Library & Museums
State Representative Paula Hicks-Hudson
Troy Main Street, Inc

**North Carolina:**
Afro-American Historical & Genealogical Society Charlotte Chapter
City of Durham
Friends of Geer Cemetery
Preservation North Carolina
River Jordan Council on African American Heritage
University of North Carolina System
Union Foundation

**Oklahoma:**
Afendras Archaeology, LLC
Oklahoma Public Archaeology Network (OKPAN)
State Historic Preservation Office

**Oregon:**
Restore Oregon

**Pennsylvania:**
Boyertown Area Historical Society
Friends of Midland
Mt. Tabor Preservation Project
Pennsylvania Archaeological Council
Pennsylvania Hallowed Grounds
Philadelphia Archaeological Forum
Preservation Pennsylvania

**Tennessee:**
Baskerville Memorial Cemetery Association (BMCA)

**Texas:**
Afro-American Genealogy and Historical Society Willie Lee Gay H-Town Chapter
Convict Leasing and Labor Project
Descendants of Olivewood, Inc.
San Antonio African American Community Archive and Museum
Staples African-American Freedmen Colony Association
Texas Freedom Colonies Project

**Vermont:**
Vermont State Historic Preservation Office

**Virginia:**
Afro-American Genealogy and Historical Society, Greater Richmond
Alexandria Branch, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
AMMD Pine Grove Project
City of Roanoke

Enrichmond
Fairfield Foundation
Friends of Fairview
Hidden in Plain Site
Historic Richmond
Historic Staunton Foundation
Josephine School Community Museum
Preservation Piedmont
Preservation Virginia
Preservers of the Daughters of Zion Cemetery
Racial Justice Alexandria
Richmond Hill
Roanoke Valley Preservation Foundation
Sacred Grounds Project
Shenandoah Valley Black History Project
Southside African American Cemetery Preservation Society
Staunton Augusta County African American Research Society
Virginia Roots

**Washington:**
Washington Trust for Historic Preservation

**Washington, District of Columbia:**
African American Heritage Preservation Foundation, Inc.
Archaeology in the Community

Cc: Members of the House Committee on Natural Resources