March 22, 2016

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Chairman
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
2205 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
2256 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Calvert and Ranking Member McCollum:

We write requesting that you support economic development, job creation, and our national heritage by appropriating $87.4 million in funding for the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) for Fiscal Year 2017, as recommended in the President’s Fiscal Year 2017 budget proposal. Of the total request, $46.9 million is for State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs), $11.985 million is for Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPOs), and $500,000 is for grants to underserved communities. In addition, this request includes $25 million for the Civil Rights competitive grants initiative and $3 million for competitive grants for Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Tying all of our Nation’s historic preservation programs together are the SHPOs and THPOs. SHPOs carry out the National Historic Preservation Act which provides citizens the tools they need to revitalize, rehabilitate, and protect the places that give meaning to America. Funding for SHPOs leverages investments through local jobs, non-federal contributions and long-term economic development. SHPOs administer the Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit which, over the life of the program, has created more than 2 million jobs. Annually, SHPOs also review more than 100,000 federal undertakings for their impact on historic resources and survey more than 16.5 million acres for cultural resources.

THPOs carry-out many of the same functions as SHPOs in tribal areas. There are now 157 THPOs, compared to only 12 in fiscal year 1996 when the program was first funded. Unfortunately the amount of HPF funds appropriated is not keeping pace with this expansion. The addition of new THPOs each year keeps the average level of support per THPO suppressed at around $60,000 barely enough to operate a program.

Additionally we support the $25 million for competitive grants to fund a Civil Rights initiative that will be used for preserving, documenting and interpreting the sites and stories of the Civil Rights movement and the African American Experience.
Funding these core and essential historic preservation programs represents a true investment in America’s treasured legacy multiplied many times over through public-private economic partnerships and ventures. Most importantly, it would create much needed jobs and ensure the protection of historic resources nationwide that might otherwise be lost forever.

If you need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Andrew Signon in Rep. Turner’s office at x56465 (andrew.signon@mail.house.gov) or Paul Balmer in Rep. Blumeneru’s office at x54811 (paul.balmer@mail.house.gov).

Sincerely,

Michael R. Turner  
Member of Congress

Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress

Robert A. Brady  
Member of Congress

Donald M. Payne, Jr.  
Member of Congress

Brad Ashford  
Member of Congress

James R. Langevin  
Member of Congress

Debbie Dingell  
Member of Congress

Brendan F. Boyle  
Member of Congress

Bonnie Watson Coleman  
Member of Congress

Joyce Beatty  
Member of Congress
Ann Kirkpatrick
Member of Congress

Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress

Michelle Lujan Grisham
Member of Congress

Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
Member of Congress

James Clyburn
Member of Congress

Ryan A. Costello
Member of Congress

Mark Pocan
Member of Congress

William R. Keating
Member of Congress

Suzan DelBene
Member of Congress

Richard Hanna
Member of Congress

Dina Titus
Member of Congress

John Yarmuth
Member of Congress
C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger
Member of Congress

Judy Chu
Member of Congress

John Conyers, Jr.
Member of Congress

William Lacy Clay
Member of Congress

John Garamendi
Member of Congress

Madelline Bordallo
Member of Congress

John Sarbanes
Member of Congress

Donna F. Edwards
Member of Congress

André Carson
Member of Congress

Mike Quigley
Member of Congress

Brian Higgins
Member of Congress

Paul Tonko
Member of Congress

Louise M. Slaughter
Member of Congress

Marcia L. Fudge
Member of Congress
Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress

Eliot L. Engel
Member of Congress

Sean Patrick Maloney
Member of Congress

Frank A. LoBiondo
Member of Congress