

April 17, 2020

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairwoman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Interior, Environment and
Related Agencies
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tom Udall
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Interior, Environment and
Related Agencies
125 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairwoman Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall:

We are writing to request that you support historic preservation needs associated with the coronavirus pandemic. The men and women involved in historic preservation play an essential role in legally mandated environmental and historic review processes for federally permitted or funded projects, which are still proceeding for many agencies. They also provide Americans with a sense of place and purpose and play an important role in strengthening local economies in towns and cities throughout America.

We urge you to pursue legislation that provides a combination of electronic infrastructure funding for State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPOs) and Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs), and significant historic preservation funding for local governments. The coronavirus pandemic and the resulting need for SHPO and THPO staff to continue working remotely has highlighted the importance of having historic resource surveys completed and digitized and available electronically. This electronic infrastructure funding is vital for making sure that our historic resources are protected while at the same time guaranteeing that important infrastructure projects are not delayed because records are inaccessible or incomplete. Funding for local governments through the Certified Local Government program will provide an economic stimulus to small towns and big cities throughout America, while also helping to preserve the historic resources that tell those communities' stories and provide a sense of place and stability – something that is particularly important as our nation seeks to heal the emotional and financial scars left by the coronavirus pandemic.

We specifically propose inclusion of these provisions in a supplemental funding bill:

- \$30 Million SHPOs – For investments in survey, digitization of records, GIS, electronic project review systems, staff and equipment;
- \$15 Million THPOs – For investments in survey, digitization of records, GIS, electronic project review systems, staff and equipment, and;

- \$75 Million Directed to Certified Local Governments for Bricks and mortar, survey, education and planning.

We are also urging the Environment and Public Works Committee to include an additional \$30 million for SHPOs and \$15 million for THPOs in any large infrastructure bill. This funding would be essential for making sure that historic and cultural resource reviews of infrastructure projects can be both thorough and efficient.

Finally, we are urging the Senate Finance Committee to include S. 2615, the Historic Tax Credit Growth and Opportunity Act of 2019, in any tax bill intended to stimulate economic growth. We also support a temporary increase in the value Rehabilitation Tax Credit, which is commonly called the Historic Tax Credit.

The appropriations funding can be disbursed using existing programs and, as a result, could be deployed quickly. We appreciate you taking the time to review our proposal and would look forward to discussing the specifics. These resources would address problems that the coronavirus pandemic has exposed and provide critical investments in towns and cities throughout the country. This funding is both an economic and historical imperative that creates jobs and protects historic resources that might otherwise be lost forever.

Thank you for your consideration of these funding requests.

Sincerely,

National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers

National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers

National Trust for Historic Preservation

National Alliance of Preservation Commissions

Preservation Action

National Preservation Partners Network

Preservation Maryland

Michigan Historic Preservation Network

Clinton Brown Company Architecture

Preservation Strategies

Indiana Landmarks

Arizona Preservation Foundation

Greater Portland Landmarks

Van Dyke Architects LLC

Preservation Kentucky

Oxford Visitors Bureau, dba Enjoy Oxford

Friends of Freedom Society, Inc.

Preservation Dayton, Inc.

Main Street Ravenna

Lisbon Landmark Foundation

Wickenburg Chamber of Commerce

The Scioto Companies

Newport Restoration Foundation

Main Street Wadsworth

Flagstaff Townsite Historic Properties Community Land Trust

Main Street Wooster, Inc.

Main Street Portsmouth

Cross Street Partners

Architectural Reclamation, Inc.

Washington Trust for Historic Preservation

Learning Places!

Association of Monterey Preservationists

Easton Architects