

NCSHPO

National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers

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Statement for the Record of

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For a Hearing before the
HOUSE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS, AND PUBLIC LANDS

[H.R. 6589](#) (Rep. Leger Fernández), *To amend title 54, United States Code, to increase amounts deposited in the Historic Preservation Fund, and for other purposes. Historic Preservation Enhancement Act.*

Thursday, April 28, 2022 | 1324 Longworth, Washington D.C.

The National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers (NCSHPO) supports efforts to protect and promote our nation's greatest historic and cultural assets. In 1976, Congress established the Historic Preservation Fund to do just this by providing funding to States to work on the Federal Government's behalf – recognizing that the identification and protection of our nation's irreplaceable historic places is best accomplished through directly engaging and supporting constituents rather than by federal agency directive. This work is accomplished through the efforts of the network of State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs) in each of the 50 states as well as the territories and the District of Columbia. SHPOs fulfill multiple federally delegated responsibilities under the National Historic Preservation Act, ranging from the identification and documentation of historic properties to the review and comment upon the impact of federal undertakings on historic resources. This partnership reflects a remarkable example of federalism in action.

NCSHPO applauds the efforts by Congresswoman Leger Fernández for her introduction of H.R. 6589, the Historic Preservation Enhancement Act. This legislation recognizes the crucial role that the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) plays in funding historic preservation efforts of State Historic Preservation Offices and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices plus competitive grant programs supporting preservation efforts nationwide.

The proposed increase to the HPF authorization amount is critical to ensure SHPOs can continue to identify, preserve, and protect our diverse American heritage. Adequate funding is essential for SHPOs to carry on meeting their existing workload, to recruit qualified staff with competitive salaries, and to invest in the digital technology necessary to complete this important work, a need that will only be heightened by the thousands of projects expected as

a result of the recent historic \$1.2 trillion infrastructure investments. SHPOs anticipate a significant uptick in Section 106 project review, a core SHPO mission to balance progress towards the future with preservation of our communities' past. Further, ensuring the authorized amount is appropriated annually for its intended purpose gives these offices the reliability they need to prioritize efforts and to staff their agency adequately to ensure maximum constituent service. Permanent HPF authorization will further enhance that reliability and ease concerns for future funding, especially for the all-important people capacity needed to aid the efforts of individual Americans and communities to preserve our nation's history.

To date, the HPF has facilitated nearly 2 million listings in the National Register nationwide and made possible the survey of millions of acres for cultural resources for planning and preservation purposes. The HPF has also provided SHPOs with the staff capacity to maximize constituent access to the Historic Tax Credit program, which to date has not only generated substantial private investment in historic rehabilitation projects but also yielded more than \$38.1 billion in federal tax revenue. In FY 2021, HPF funding enabled SHPOs to review nearly 125,000 federal projects and in doing so, to balance the laudable desire for progress with the vital need to preserve our past and to maintain our sense of place.

Permanent, full, and guaranteed funding will ensure that SHPOs can continue to fulfill a key charge of the National Historic Preservation Act – to help Americans preserve “the historical and cultural foundations of the Nation ... as a living part of our community life and development in order to give a sense of orientation to the American people.”

On behalf of all 59 SHPOs, I'd like to thank you, Chairman Neguse, Congresswoman Leger Fernández, and the other members of the U.S. House Natural Resources Committee, Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands for the opportunity to provide this statement for the record. I thank this committee for their efforts to advance historic preservation and the vital role it plays in our nation's present and in its future.