Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 3, 2009

The Honorable Norm Dicks
Chairman
House Appropriations Subcommittee
On Interior, Environment and
Related Agencies
B-308 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mike Simpson
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee
On Interior, Environment and
Related Agencies
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Dicks and Ranking Member Simpson:

We write asking you to appropriate funding for the nation's core historic preservation programs in the amount of $55 million for the State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPOs), including $5 million for records digitization grants. In addition, we respectfully request funding in the amount of $20 million for the Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPOs), $30 million for Save America's Treasures and $10 million for Preserve America in Fiscal Year 2010.

More than forty years ago, Congress recognized the importance of maintaining America's heritage as "a living part of our community life" with passage of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). The NHPA, combined with presidential interest in historic preservation, led to the creation of core programs designed to preserve the character and culture of our nation.

SHPOs carry out the federal historic preservation programs and give citizens the tools they need to revitalize, rehabilitate, and protect the very places that give meaning to the American experience. Funding for SHPOs returns the federal investment by leveraging additional dollars through local jobs, non-federal contributions and long-term economic development. THPOs provide many of the same vital functions on tribal lands.

SAT provides the only "bricks-and-mortar" funding for historic preservation projects nationwide, and Preserve America promotes heritage tourism and educational grants. Both of these valuable programs are built upon the foundation laid by the SHPOs and THPOs.

Preservation has become the primary driver of economic development in hundreds of communities by generating jobs, revitalizing downtown and neighborhoods, creating affordable housing and building local property taxes. Additionally, re-use of historic buildings, greening the existing building stock, and reinvesting in historic communities creates a more sustainable environment.

Fully funding these historic preservation programs would represent a true investment in America's legacy multiplied many times over through public-private economic partnerships and ventures. Most importantly, it would ensure the protection of historic resources nationwide that might otherwise be lost forever.

If you need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact either Ken Reidy at ken.reidy@mail.house.gov or Brett DeWitt at brett.dewitt@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,

Rep. Russ Carnahan
Member of Congress

Rep. Michael R. Turner
Member of Congress

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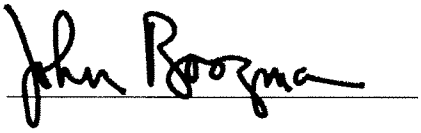

Page 2

Jim Langevin	Henry Brown
Leonard Lance	John Barrow
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Frank Pallone, Jr.	Paul Tonko
Charles Gonzalez	Dina Titus
Joseph Crowley	Stephanie Herseth Sandlin
Mike Doyle	Patrick Kennedy
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Peter Roskam	Brian Higgins
Chris Murphy	
Michael Michaud	Betty Sutton
Chris Van Hollen	Dan Maffei
Neil Abercrombie	Mazie Hirono

Page 3

Debbie Halvorson	Leonard Boswell
Raul Grijalva	Carol Shea-Porter
Nick Rahall	Rush Holt
Dave Loebsack	Gwen Moore
Steve Kagen	Sander Levin
Mary Jo Kilroy	Tim V. Johnson
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Bruce Braley	Albio Sires
Chellie Pingree	Jared Polis
John Sarbanes	Rosa DeLauro
Bobby Rush	Jessie Jackson, Jr.
Frank LoBiondo	Bob Filner

Page 4

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Henry Waxman	Vic Snyder
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Spencer Baucus	Luis Gutiérrez
Barney Frank	Earl Blumenauer
Mel Watt	Bart Gordon
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Lloyd Doggett	Paul Hodes

Page 5

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