



January 25, 2024

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Room S-128, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins
Vice-Chair
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Room S-128, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kay Granger
Chair
House Committee on Appropriations
H-307, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Murray, Vice-Chair Collins, Chair Granger, and Ranking Member DeLauro,

The National Trust for Historic Preservation writes today to congratulate Congressional leaders on arriving at top-line spending levels for the remainder of fiscal year 2024. Finalizing the outstanding appropriations measures will provide both critical funding and certainty for the nation's historic preservation programs.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation is a privately funded charitable, educational, and nonprofit organization chartered by Congress in 1949 to “facilitate public participation in historic preservation” and to further the purposes of federal historic preservation laws.¹ The intent of Congress was for the National Trust “to mobilize and coordinate public interest, participation, and resources in the preservation and interpretation of sites and buildings.”² With headquarters in Washington, D.C., 28 historic sites, more than one million members and supporters, and a national network of partners in states, territories, and the District of Columbia, the National Trust works to save America's historic places and advocates for historic preservation as a fundamental value in programs and policies at all levels of government.

The new top-line funding level of \$1.59 trillion, as set forth in last year's Fiscal Responsibility Act, will include \$704 billion for non-defense discretionary spending. We believe the provisions found in S. 2605, the Senate version of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, will best achieve the nation's historic preservation policy objectives for Fiscal Year 2024.

¹ 54 U.S.C. § § 320101, 312102

² *ibid*

The Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) is the principal source of federal funding to implement historic preservation programs and priorities. It includes crucial support to State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs), Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPOs), and several vital competitive grant programs. With a current enacted level of \$204.515 million, we initially recommended \$225 million for the HPF in FY 2024, which reflects the urgent need in the field to protect more places associated with diverse American stories. Increased demands on the essential responsibilities for SHPOs and THPOs necessitates greater federal investment.

Upon review of the final House and Senate appropriations bills, we urge the committee to adopt the higher annual funding number found in the Senate version of \$195.166 million for the HPF. Additionally, the Senate bill includes a key provision extending the authorization of the HPF for another year. The authorization for the HPF expired on September 30, 2023, without reauthorizing action. This vital language will give Congress more time to act on legislation to reauthorize the HPF and will provide the preservation community with the certainty needed to continue the inspiring work of preserving a more complete historic narrative.

The competitive grant programs supported through the HPF help stimulate economic development and job creation and help our communities become more vibrant and livable. In recent years, the HPF has increasingly supported several grant programs that are accomplishing important historic preservation work throughout the country, including the Save America's Treasures rehabilitation grant program, preservation projects at Historically Black Colleges and Universities, the African American Civil Rights Grant Program, the History of Equal Rights Grants, the Paul Bruhn Revitalization Grants, and the Underrepresented Communities Grant Program. Notably, a sizable majority of awarded HPF grant funds have supported bricks and mortar, job creating projects. The HPF also supports repair and rehabilitation efforts after natural disasters such as Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, and Sandy, and HPF programs are significantly helping communities preserve the stories that define our cities and towns.

We appreciate the opportunity to urgently request the provisions found in the Senate appropriations bill, including \$195.166 million and the one-year extension of authorization for the HPF. We stand ready to assist the Committee in support of our recommendations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shaw Sprague", is centered on a light gray rectangular background.

Shaw Sprague
Vice President of Government Relations
National Trust for Historic Preservation