



**National Trust for  
Historic Preservation®**  
*Save the past. Enrich the future.*

November 26, 2018

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski  
Chairman  
Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rob Bishop  
Chairman  
House Natural Resources Committee  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Maria Cantwell  
Ranking Member  
Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Raúl Grijalva  
Ranking Member  
House Natural Resources Committee  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Murkowski, Chairman Bishop, and Ranking Members Cantwell and Grijalva:

As businesses, organizations, and supporters of historic preservation, we strongly support expanded use of leasing historic buildings in our national parks. Historic leasing, which provides private investments in park assets, should be one component of a comprehensive strategy to address the deferred maintenance backlog of the National Park Service (NPS). While reliable, dedicated federal funding distinct from annual appropriations is essential to abate the maintenance backlog and preserve historic sites, the leasing of historic buildings is a complementary strategy.

The National Park System is one of our nation's best ideas—a network of 417 parks and sites that protect spectacular historic, cultural, and natural resources and tell the stories of remarkable people and events in our country's history. Unfortunately, after over 100 years of operation and inconsistent public funding, the National Park System faces a deferred maintenance backlog estimated at \$11.6 billion, and according to FY17 data, 47% of the backlog is attributed to historic assets. Deferred maintenance in our national parks puts historic and cultural sites at risk of permanent damage or loss, and in the absence of dedicated funding and innovative solutions like historic leasing, the condition of these assets will continue to deteriorate and become more expensive to repair and preserve in the future.

Leasing of historic buildings in the National Park System is an effective and proven public-private partnership that should be one of the options to abate the NPS deferred maintenance backlog. The NPS has the legal authority to enter into lease agreements whereby the park maintains ownership of the building, but the lessee is responsible for the preservation and maintenance needs of the structure. For long-term commercial leases of 55 years or more, the lessee is able to utilize the federal historic tax credit and receive a 20 percent credit for qualified rehabilitation expenses.

Historic leasing partnerships alleviate the burden on the NPS to maintain historic buildings by reducing maintenance costs and the repair backlog, allowing reallocation of scarce resources to other priority projects, providing services for visitors and residents of gateway communities, while bringing historic buildings back to life.

Addressing the deferred maintenance backlog ensures that we preserve historic buildings and necessary infrastructure in safe condition and that parks remain open and accessible so that the public can continue to learn from and experience the stories that tell our nation's history. Our national parks celebrate our historic and natural treasures, and we have a responsibility to ensure our parks are maintained and preserved so future generations can continue to enjoy and learn from them.

Sincerely,

## Organizations:

National Trust for Historic Preservation (DC)  
Historic Tax Credit Coalition (DC)  
National Main Street Center (IL)  
National Trust Community Investment Corporation (DC)  
National Trust Insurance Services, LLC (MD)  
  
Alaska Association for Historic Preservation (AK)  
Allamakee County Economic Development & Tourism (IA)  
American Anthropological Association (VA)  
American Association for State and Local History (TN)  
American Cultural Resources Association (DC)  
American Institute of Architects (DC)  
Apostle Islands Historic Preservation Conservancy (WI)  
Archaeology Southwest (AZ)  
Arizona Downtown Alliance (AZ)  
Arizona Heritage Alliance (AZ)  
Arizona Preservation Foundation (AZ)  
Arizona Vintage Sign Coalition (AZ)  
Baltimore Heritage, Inc. (MD)  
Bayfield Heritage Association (WI)  
Bayfield Maritime Museum (WI)  
bKL Architecture LLC (IL)  
Boston Preservation Alliance (MA)  
Cape Cod Modern House Trust (MA)  
City of Vicksburg (MS)  
CityWide Development Corporation (OH)  
Coalition for American Heritage (DC)  
Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park (OH)  
Cowlitz County, Washington Historic Preservation Commission (WA)  
Cuyahoga Valley Countryside Conservancy (OH)  
Downtown Waynesville Association (NC)  
Enhanced Capital (LA)  
Field Station Cooperative Preschool (IN)  
Fort Mason Center for Arts & Culture (CA)  
Friends of Hot Springs National Park (AR)  
Friends of Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial (OH)  
Friends of the Natatorium (HI)  
Gene Kansas Commercial Real Estate (GA)  
Goatfeathers Point Farm, a Countryside Initiative Farm (OH)  
Greater Hot Springs Chamber of Commerce (AR)  
Greenfield Berry Farm, a Countryside Initiative Farm (OH)  
Harrisonburg Downtown Renaissance (VA)  
Heritage Ohio (OH)  
Historic Charleston Foundation (SC)  
Historic Columbia (SC)  
Indiana Landmarks (IN)  
Indianapolis Civil War Round Table (IN)  
Lewis Glasser PLLC (WV)  
MacRostie Historic Advisors LLC (DC)  
Main Street Siloam Springs, Inc. (AR)  
Maine Downtown Center (ME)  
Maine Preservation (ME)  
Mainstreet Uptown Butte (MT)  
Milwaukee Preservation Alliance (WI)  
Mississippi Heritage Trust (MS)  
Montessori Children's Home of Valley Forge (PA)  
National Aviation Heritage Alliance (OH)  
National Council on Public History (IN)  
Nebraska Main Street Network (NE)  
Neitenbach Farm, a Countryside Initiative Farm (OH)  
Oxbow Orchard, a Countryside Initiative Farm (OH)  
Pennsylvania Downtown Center (PA)  
Preservation Alliance for Greater Philadelphia (PA)  
Preservation Iowa (IA)  
Preservation Maryland (MD)  
Preservation Pennsylvania (PA)  
Preservation Utah (UT)  
Preservation Virginia (VA)  
Quapaw Baths & Spa (AR)  
Restore Oregon (OR)  
Rosin Preservation (MO)  
Santa Fe Trail Association (KS)  
Save Our Heritage Organisation (CA)  
Sea Level Consulting (AK)  
Site Steward Foundation, Inc. (NM)  
Society for American Archaeology (DC)  
Society for Historical Archaeology (MD)  
Spice Acres, a Countryside Initiative Farm (OH)  
Star Spangled Banner Flag House and Museum (MD)  
Stonehenge Capital Company, LLC (LA)  
Superior Bathhouse Brewery (AR)  
Taylor/Kempkes, Architects (AR)  
The Piedmont Environmental Council (VA)  
Valley Forge Park Events, LLC (PA)  
Visit Virginia's Blue Ridge (VA)  
Washburn Heritage Association (WI)  
Washburn Historical Society (WI)  
Washington Trust for Historic Preservation (WA)  
WBNewmanJr., LLC (VA)  
Zest Enterprise, LLC dba Hotel Hale (AR)

**Individuals:**

Andrea Heim, Farm Manager, Spice Acres (OH)  
Barton Myers, Associate Professor of History,  
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Museum & White House of the Confederacy (VA)  
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Children's House of Valley Forge (PA)

John Ramírez, Parent, Montessori  
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Children's House of Valley Forge (PA)  
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