



Statement of the Coalition for American Heritage
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Fiscal Year 2020 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations
Committee on Appropriations, U.S. House of Representatives
March 15, 2019

Chairwoman McCollum, Ranking Member Joyce, and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to offer the Coalition for American Heritage's recommendations for Fiscal Year 2020 (FY20) Interior, Environment and Related Agencies appropriations.

The Coalition for American Heritage ("the Coalition") is an organization comprised of heritage professionals, scholars, small businesses, non-profits and history-lovers across the country. Our 350,000 members work together to promote our nation's commitment to historic preservation. Preserving historic resources helps stabilize neighborhoods, attract investment, create jobs, generate tax revenues, support small businesses, and power America's heritage tourism industry.

To continue our country's proud tradition of preservation, the Coalition urges robust funding for all of the U.S. Department of the Interior's historic preservation and cultural management programs, and for the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities. Respectfully, the Coalition urges the Committee to approve the following funding levels for FY20:

- National Park Service (NPS): \$2.5 billion
- NPS Historic Preservation Fund: \$148.5 million
- NPS Deferred Maintenance: \$476 million
- NPS Office of International Affairs: \$1.5 million
- NPS National Heritage Areas and Heritage Partnership Program: \$32 million
- Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Cultural Resources Management: \$20 million
- BLM National Landscape Conservation System: \$45 million
- Department of Interior Land and Conservation Fund (LWCF): continued increase toward the full \$900 million in dedicated funding from offshore mineral leasing revenues
- National Endowment for the Arts (NEA): \$167.5 million
- National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH): \$167.5 million

National Park Service

We urge the Committee to fund the NPS at the FY19 enacted level of \$2.5 billion. The popularity of our national parks is at an all-time high. Our country cannot afford unwarranted reductions to visitor services and cuts to the responsible stewardship of our historic and cultural resources. The NPS is responsible for 418 National Park System units. Over the past 20 years, more than 40 new parks have been added to the park system. Many recent additions preserve historic places and themes that have traditionally been underrepresented within the system.

Within the \$2.5 billion requested, we recommend robust funding for Resource Stewardship, including \$1 million for the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom, \$2 million for the

African American Civil Rights Network, and \$2 million for the Reconstruction Era National Historic Network. Funding for these popular initiatives provides the public with valuable educational resources that honor and preserve our country's rich African American heritage and history for future generations.

NPS Historic Preservation Fund

We urge the Committee to appropriate \$148.5 million in FY20 for the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF), a vital program that, in partnership with states, local governments and tribes, is the cornerstone of our country's historic preservation initiatives.

Within the \$148.5 million request, we recommend the following funding breakdown:

- \$60 million for State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPOs) for heritage preservation and protection programs.
- \$20 million for Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs).
- \$5 million for a new competitive grant program to digitize, map and survey historic and cultural resources. Using this program, SHPOs and THPOs could create and enhance GIS-based maps of historic resources and develop predictive models. This investment would advance the faster, less expensive, and more efficient delivery of infrastructure projects while ensuring the protection of America's most cherished historic resources.
- \$30 million for competitive grants to document, interpret, and preserve historic sites associated with the Civil Rights Movement.
- \$15 million for Save America's Treasures grants for the preservation of nationally significant sites, structures and artifacts.
- \$10 million for grants to Historically Black Colleges and Universities to preserve and repair historic buildings.
- \$7.5 million for preservation grants to revitalize historic properties of national, state, and local significance.
- \$1 million for competitive grants for the survey and nomination of properties associated with communities currently underrepresented on the National Register of Historic Places and National Historic Landmarks.

NPS Deferred Maintenance

We urge the Committee to appropriate \$476 million in FY20 to address the deferred maintenance backlog at America's national parks. Almost half of the current backlog concern historic assets. Robust investments in this area will contribute to the successful preservation of historic sites and structures and other NPS cultural resources. Without critically needed funding for repair and rehabilitation, these critical sites, buildings and artifacts that draw visitors to our national parks assets risk further deterioration and potential loss.

Within the \$476 million request, we recommend the following funding breakdown:

- \$160 million for Line Item Construction projects
- \$150 million for Repair and Rehabilitation
- \$166 million for Cyclic Maintenance

Line Item Construction projects: We support at least \$160 million toward addressing the needs of the highest priority non-transportation assets.

Repair and Rehabilitation: We recommend \$150 million, a \$14 million increase above the FY19 enacted level. The Committee's support for these programs has been very helpful in addressing the long-term maintenance needs at America's national parks over the past several years.

Cyclic Maintenance: We recommend \$160 for cyclic maintenance, a \$15 million increase above the FY19 enacted level. These efforts are critical to preventing assets from degrading to the point of needing repair. Performing regular maintenance will help prevent an increase in the number of deferred maintenance projects.

National Park Service: Office of International Affairs

We urge a \$1.5 million FY20 appropriation for the NPS Office of International Affairs. This funding would ensure that the United States can robustly engage in and support the World Heritage Program. Communities throughout the country are pursuing nominations of sites in their area to the World Heritage List, including Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks in Ohio and Mount Vernon in Virginia. The Office of International Affairs is critical to shepherding advocates through the nominations process.

The Administration proposed to consolidate the Southwest Border Protection Program into the Office of International Affairs program. We are very concerned that this change would mean that the Office of International Affairs will not have the resources necessary to fulfill its mission effectively.

NPS National Heritage Areas

We recommend \$32 million in funding for the Heritage Partnership Program and our National Heritage Areas (NHAs). Through the use of public-private partnerships, NHAs support historic preservation, heritage tourism, and recreation. These programs collaborate with communities to make heritage relevant to local interests and needs.

BLM Cultural Resources Management

We urge the Committee to appropriate \$20 million, a modest increase of \$3 million above the FY19 enacted level. The increase is necessary to fulfill the BLM's substantial workload requirements under the National Historic Preservation Act, for land use assessments (up to 13,000 per year) and inventory and protection of cultural resources. The increase would support surveys of sensitive areas, site protection and stabilization projects for sites vulnerable to unauthorized activities and damage due to fire, erosion and changing water levels. Increased funding would also support updated predictive modeling and data analysis to enhance the BLM's ability to address large-scale, cross-jurisdictional land-use projects. To support the effective implementation of the increased appropriation level, we further recommend that the Committee encourage the BLM to promote inventory information-sharing with state and tribal historic preservation officers.

BLM National Landscape Conservation System

We urge a \$45 million FY20 appropriation for the National Landscape Conservation System. An increase in base funding will prevent critical damage to 36 million acres of congressionally and presidentially designated National Monuments, National Conservation Areas, Wilderness, Wilderness Study Areas, National Scenic and Historic Trails, and Wild Scenic Rivers. Increased funding will ensure proper management and provide for a quality visitor experience.

We urge the Committee to reject the Administration's proposed cuts to the Oregon and California Grants Lands programs, which would result in reduced visitor services, decreased maintenance and care of trails, and fewer educational and interpretive resources.

BLM Land Water Conservation Fund

We urge the Committee to reject the Administration's drastic cuts to the LWCF. Instead, we urge the Committee to continue increasing LWCF funding toward the full \$900 million from offshore mineral leasing revenues that is dedicated to the LWCF annually. Many of our country's most significant historic and cultural landscapes have been permanently protected through LWCF investments, including Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Park, Canyons of the Ancients National Monument, and Hopewell Culture National Historic Park. In total, more than \$550 million has been invested to acquire historic sites and 137,000 acres in 162 NPS units.

Within LWCF funding, we urge the Committee to fund the American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP) at \$10 million in FY20. Through public-private partnerships, the ABPP has helped communities to preserve more than 100 historic battlefields in 42 states and territories. In protecting the hallowed ground upon which so many Americans fought and died, the ABPP preserves a valuable part of our shared history.

Independent Agencies: Advisory Council on Historic Preservation

We request \$7 million for the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), to fund its work to administer the rulemaking process for historic preservation law, assist in resolving conflicts from historic resource reviews, and provide advice on historic preservation.

National Endowments for the Arts and the Humanities

The Coalition urges the Committee to fund the NEA and the NEH at \$167.5 million in FY20. Robust funding for the NEA and NEH is critical to communities across America. For example, support from the NEA has created programs like Arts and Shadows at the Shadows-on-the-Teche in Louisiana that put regionally-based artists in residence at the site, resulting in programming that attracted new audiences and served as a prototype for broader arts-focused programming that draws people to the town's commercial district. The NEA is also a collaborator in the Blue Star Museums program, which offers America's active duty military families free admission to more than 2,000 museums every summer. NEH support has brought teachers from around the country to learn about history in the places that it was made, and to carry those experiences back to their classrooms.

The Coalition is grateful to the Committee for the opportunity to offer its perspective on FY20 appropriations for the Interior, Environment and Related Agencies appropriations bill. The Coalition stands ready to work with the Committee on finding common ground to achieve the FY20 funding levels that will support and enhance historic preservation.