



December 18, 2019

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Joe Manchin
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Manchin:

As organizations devoted to the promotion of America's commitment to historic preservation, we write to express our support for S Res 315, the resolution memorializing the discovery of the Clotilda, the last known ship to bring slaves from Africa to the United States in 1860.

The wreckage of the Clotilda is a significant archaeological find that illuminates America's history and the story of the transatlantic slave trade in uniquely compelling ways. The ship's wreckage provides crucial archaeological evidence for the history of the Africatown community, the community established by survivors of the Clotilda after the end of the Civil War, and for our nation.

For the residents of Africatown, Alabama, the ship is a tangible connection to their ancestors. The Clotilda ship is physical proof the oral history of Africatown, the only community in America founded and run by African-born former slaves. It serves as a testament to the resilience and fortitude of the Clotilda survivors who worked to maintain their community and their culture.

Despite the widespread nature of the international slave trade, the Clotilda is one of only 13 ships ever found that participated in the global slave trade, which included more than 20,000 vessels. It is the only ship ever discovered that is known to have been involved in the American slave trade. The international historic significance of this find is indisputable.

Were the U.S. Senate to proclaim the significance of the Clotilda, it would be a fitting tribute to the historic and educational value of this discovery. We urge you to pass S Res 315 in the most expeditious manner possible.

Sincerely,

American Anthropological Association
American Cultural Resources Association
Coalition for American Heritage
Professional Archaeologists of New York City
Society for American Archaeology
Society for Historical Archaeology