

May 9, 2018

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Chairman
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Interior, Environment and
Related Agencies
2205 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Interior, Environment and
Related Agencies
2256 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Re: FY19 Appropriation for the National Park Service's Office of International Affairs

Dear Chairman Calvert and Ranking Member McCollum:

As organizations dedicated to the preservation of the cultural heritage resources of the United States, we write today regarding the engagement by the United States in the World Heritage Program. We urge you to appropriate \$1.5 million in FY19 to the National Park Service's Office of International Affairs to ensure that the United States can robustly engage in and support the World Heritage Program. Congress allocated \$972,000 for the program in FY17, and \$966,000 in FY18. We believe that the current level of activity in and the importance of the World Heritage Program merit an increase to \$1.5 million.

The United States was the world leader in the creation of the World Heritage Program in 1972, and was the first country to ratify the Convention in 1973. In 1978 the United States hosted the second session of the World Heritage Committee and two of the first 12 sites inscribed on the World Heritage List were Yellowstone National Park and Mesa Verde National Park. In recent years, the San Antonio Missions (Texas, 2015) and the Monumental Earthworks of Poverty Point (Louisiana, 2014) have been inscribed. Today, just 23 of the 1073 properties inscribed on the World Heritage List are in the United States, but many more are eligible.

Increasing numbers of communities throughout the United States continue to pursue and make progress with the Department of the Interior on the World Heritage Tentative List and nominations to the World Heritage List despite the decades of effort and considerable financial expenditure required. The Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks (Ohio), Frank Lloyd Wright Buildings (Arizona, California, Illinois, New York, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin) and Civil Rights Movement Sites (Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Mississippi, various) are just a few of the sites which communities around the United States have worked tirelessly to advance. There are substantial social, cultural and economic benefits to communities and sites in the United States and worldwide that result from inclusion in the World Heritage List. The World Heritage Program builds mutual respect for the cultural and natural heritage and peaceful coexistence of all humanity.

For these reasons we believe it is of critical importance for the United States to remain robustly engaged in and supportive of the World Heritage Program. We are committed to continue to strongly support such efforts. We urge you to provide funds to both support World Heritage nominations of sites in the United States and to demonstrate leadership in, and support for, the important work of ensuring global peace through the mutual respect of heritage of outstanding universal value worldwide.

We greatly appreciate the strong support Congress has shown for the preservation of our nation's heritage. We look forward to working with you throughout the appropriations process and thank you for your consideration.

For questions, please contact Bill Pencek with the United States National Committee of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (US/ICOMOS) (bpencek@usicomos.org; 202-463-1291).

Sincerely,

US/ICOMOS (The United States National Committee of the International Council on Monuments and Sites)
American Anthropological Association
American Cultural Resources Association
American Historical Association
City of San Antonio, Texas
Cleveland Restoration Society
Coalition for American Heritage
ICOMOS IFLA International Scientific Committee on Cultural Landscapes
National Trust for Historic Preservation
Ohio History Connection
Preservation Action
Society for American Archaeology
Society for Historical Archaeology