



August 21, 2023

The Honorable Bruce Westerman
202 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Westerman,

I hope this finds you well! On behalf of the organizations and businesses listed below, which help preserve historic and cultural resources across Arkansas and rely on the important work made possible through the Historic Preservation Fund, we write to urge your support of the Historic Preservation Fund Reauthorization Act (H.R. 3350).

The authorization for the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) is set to expire on September 30, 2023. The bipartisan Historic Preservation Fund Reauthorization Act, led by Representatives Mike Turner (R-OH) and Earl Blumenauer (D-OR), would reauthorize this program for 10 years and increase the authorization from \$150 million to \$250 million annually. While deposits into the HPF have not been increased since Congress created the program in the 1970s, demand on the program has grown substantially with the addition of new competitive grant programs and greater responsibilities on state and tribal preservation offices.

Since 1977, the HPF has enabled the rescue and rehabilitation of historic places, helped communities protect and celebrate the people and stories that shaped them, and created opportunities for economic growth and job creation throughout Arkansas and all over the country.

The HPF facilitates the National Park Service's administration of heritage programs like the National Register of Historic Places and the Historic Tax Credit. It provides transformative formula grants to State and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs and THPOs), which are tasked with numerous federal- and state-mandated preservation responsibilities. These grants also support subgrants for Certified Local Governments (CLGs), which are municipalities that have demonstrated a commitment to local preservation, including communities like El Dorado, Hot Springs, Pine Bluff, Russellville, Texarkana, and 16 other Arkansas communities.

The HPF also funds competitive grant programs to ensure the full American story is told, preserved, and commemorated. These grant programs include the Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grant program, which helps foster economic development in rural communities through the rehabilitation of historic buildings, the African American Civil Rights, History of Equal Rights, Underrepresented Communities, and HBCU Grant Programs, among others. Competitive grants like these guarantee future generations of Americans will learn about the long struggle for equality undertaken by those too often left on the margins. These grants have



supported projects like preserving the history of Little Rock Central High School and the renovation of the James Monroe Cox Administration Building at Philander Smith University.

Since its creation, the HPF has made possible the survey of roughly a million acres and identification of numerous cultural resources, resulting in over 98,000 listings in the National Register of Historic Places, with 1.9 million contributing resources. It has provided millions of dollars for the rehabilitation of historic buildings and leveraged more than \$199 billion in private investment through the Historic Tax Credit, generating over 3 million jobs. And it has done so without spending a dime of taxpayer money, as all its revenue comes from oil and gas leases on the Outer Continental Shelf. Numerous rehabilitation projects in Arkansas's Fourth Congressional District have been completed with the help of the Federal Historic Tax Credit, including the Griffin Auto Company Building at El Dorado; the Hale Bathhouse, Superior Bathhouse, and Thompson Building at Hot Springs; and the Bank of Russellville Building in downtown Russellville.

The Historic Preservation Reauthorization Act not only confers long-term stability upon preservation efforts and the people they employ in Arkansas and across the nation, but provides the opportunity for additional federal investment that will activate preservation projects, create jobs, and generate significant economic activity in our communities.

We appreciate your longtime commitment to historic preservation, including your ongoing support for the HPF, but recognize that time is of the essence. We urge you to support H.R. 3350 as a bipartisan, sensible solution to ensure this important program continues to benefit communities across our state, and encourage quick action in the House Natural Resources Committee.

Sincerely,

Rachel Patton
Executive Director
Preserve Arkansas

The following organizations and businesses in the Fourth Congressional District signed on to this letter in support of H.R. 3350.

Bradley County Chamber of Commerce
Camden Downtown Network
City of Texarkana, AR
Commercial National Bank, Texarkana, AR (Philip Mobley, CEO & Chairman)
El Dorado Historic District Commission
Hamburg Economic Development Team



Historic Washington Foundation (Hempstead County)
Main Street El Dorado
Main Street Russellville
Main Street Texarkana
Malvern Downtown Development Corp.
People Helping Others Excel By Example (P.H.O.E.B.E.), Hot Springs
Pine Bluff Downtown Development, Inc.
Quapaw Bathhouse & Spa, Hot Springs
Russellville Historic District Commission
SQZBX Brewery and Pizza Joint, Hot Springs
Superior Bathhouse Brewery, Hot Springs
Taylor/Kempkes Architects, Hot Springs
The Waters Hotel, Hot Springs