

**Statement of Jay D. Vogt
President
National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers**

**Testimony on “S.2262 the Preserve America and
Save America’s Treasures Program Act.”
For the Subcommittee on National Parks
Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
United States Senate
April 9, 2008**

The National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers (NCSHPO) appreciates the opportunity to submit this statement for the record on the Preserve America and Save Americas Treasures Act. NCSHPO is the professional association of the State government officials who carry out the national historic preservation program as delegates of the Secretary of Interior pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA). The NCSHPO acts as a communications vehicle among the State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs) and their staffs and represents the SHPOs with Congress, federal agencies and national preservation organizations.

National Historic Preservation Program

In 1966 Congress recognized the importance of preserving our past by passing the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA 16 USC 470), which established today’s Historic Preservation Program. The NHPA created and directs State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs) to carry out the federal preservation program: 1) Locate and record historic resources; 2) Nominate significant historic resources to the National Register of Historic Places; 3) Foster historic preservation programs at the local government level and the creation of preservation ordinances; 4) Provide funds for preservation activities (including bricks and motor repairs); 5) Comment on federal preservation tax projects; 6) Create and update State Historic Preservation plans 7) Review all federal projects for their impact on historic properties; and 8) Provide technical assistance to federal agencies, state and local governments and the private sector.

National Historic Preservation Program Funding

The National Conference has supported and continues to support increased funding for the country's national Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) and other historic preservation programs. In 1981, the states (SHPOs) funding through the HPF was cut 70% and to date, the states still struggle to reach the \$47 million level received in 1980.

NCSHPO would specifically like to thank the Subcommittee Chairman as well as Senators Landrieu, Menendez, Lincoln, and Sanders for signing onto the fiscal year 2009 letter supporting \$50 million for State Historic Preservation Offices and for increasing funds for Tribal Historic Preservation Offices, Save Americas Treasures, and Preserve America.

In order to ensure the continued integrity of the National Historic Preservation Act, the National Conference appreciates that S.2262 clarifies that the programs contained in the legislation would not be funded from the Historic Preservation Fund (16 USC 470*h*) in conformance with the eligibility language (16 USC 470*a*—Section 101(e)).

Consideration of Existing Historic Preservation Infrastructure

The National Conference believes a fulsome consideration of the long-standing, successful¹ structure of the national historic preservation program is merited prior to enacting major changes in service delivery envisioned in this bill. The current authorized historic preservation programs operate as a federal-state partnership and were created so that States play a key role in the implementation and delivery of our country's historic preservation programs. NCSHPO is concerned that the proposed legislation greatly reduces the States role.

Technical Concerns of Proposed Legislation

Finally, NCSHPO has several technical concerns. As we have seen from numerous other federal programs, when dual federal agencies become involved, problems tend to arise. Additionally, NCSHPO is concerned over the inclusion of grant criteria in federal legislation. Over time the appropriateness of the eligible projects may change and rather than having Congress amend statute, the Secretary should be given the authority to create the criteria.

Conclusion

The national historic preservation program is an outstanding example of federalism with the National Historic Preservation Act setting the policy and the states—through the SHPOs—administering the program which has flourished for the past 42 years. NCSHPO supports the activities carried out through Preserve America and Save Americas Treasures and supports a more effective partnership with the states.

Thank You.

¹ National Academy of Public Administration, "Back to the Future: A Review of the National Historic Preservation Program," Washington, DC, 2007; Office of Management and Budget, Program Assessment Rating Tool audit of the Historic Preservation Fund Programs, 2003.