

Weekly Legislative Update for State Historic Preservation Offices

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CONGRESS RETURNS FOR THREE WEEKS -- WHAT'S NEXT FOR PRESERVATION?

This week, Congress returned to Washington to address key issues before their September 26 target adjournment. At the same time, several national preservation groups got together to discuss what's expected to pass by the end of this Congress, how we're going to regroup after the November elections, and related Lobby Day preparations.

1) SENATE COMMITTEE CONSIDERS NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCE BILLS, SAYS GOODBYE TO PRESERVATION LEADER PETE DOMENICI (R-NM)

The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee met on Thursday September 11, 2008 for a full committee markup of several natural and cultural resource bills. The meeting was the committee's last this session. The audience was jam-packed with a range of interests including those focused on Alaska's "road to somewhere little-traveled" issue. The hearing was also attended by various news outlets, including NBC.

The committee considered several preservation-related bills including the reauthorization of the Route 66 Corridor Preservation program. The committee unanimously approved 53 legislative measures and reported an original bill allowing firearms in national parks and on wildlife refuges. Note: the committee reported S.2262, the Preserve America and Save America's Treasures authorization legislation, during a June 16 hearing.

The bills may be packaged in an omnibus before the session's end. Whether or not S.2262 is included within a resources omnibus is unknown.

2) INTERIOR APPROPRIATIONS BILL TIMELINE REMAINS UNCERTAIN

This week, Congressional appropriations focused on defense spending – the seven-year anniversary of September 11th helped underscore the need to focus on defense appropriations. The chances of an Interior appropriations bill grow slimmer with each passing day. One possibility is an omnibus spending package that might be passed during

the post-election lame duck session. Another possibility is a continuing resolution that would extend current spending levels into February of 2009.

3) NATIONAL PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS MEET TO DISCUSS NEXT STEPS

Each month, staff from national preservation groups meet to talk about legislative issues. Partner organizations include the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions, the National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Offices, the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and Preservation Action. The National Park Service and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation often attends to share information about agency work. These meetings also provide time for the partners to express concerns, share information, and think collaboratively about how we work together toward common goals.

On September 10, staff from many of these partner organizations met to discuss the future of the Community Restoration and Revitalization Act, the appropriations timeline, the likelihood of the Preserve America and Save America's Treasures authorization bill passing this session, and how we'll work together to respond to changes and opportunities after the November elections.

We discussed the idea of having a policy charette to help us prioritize our efforts and engage the grassroots in determining a 2009 legislative agenda.

4) GRASSROOTS POLL NOMINATIONS DUE BY SEPTEMBER 23

What's your biggest preservation concern? Preservation Action will be distributing our fourth annual Grassroots Poll on September 30th, and will be announcing the results at our members meeting at the National Trust for Historic Preservation's conference in Tulsa, OK on Friday, October 24 (2pm). Nominate an issue with nationwide relevance to appear on our ballot before September 23.

To submit an idea for the ballot, simply contact Preservation Action's Administrative Vice President Marla Collum via email at: mcollum@preservationaction.org.

The Latest Congressional Report Card

<http://www.preservationaction.org/states/9.5.2008.htm>