

SENATE MARKS UP FY2007 INTERIOR APPROPRIATIONS

June 29, 2006 - On Tuesday, June 27 the Senate Appropriations Interior and Related Agencies Subcommittee met to mark up the FY2007 spending bill supporting the Historic Preservation Fund and other federal preservation programs. The Senate mirrored the House's recommendation for State Historic Preservation Office funding at \$35,717,000 and the House's \$3,941,000 for Tribal Historic Preservation Offices but upped the ante for Save America's Treasures grants and recommended \$30 million, \$10 million of which would go toward the Preserve America program. The House recommended \$15 million for Save America's Treasures and \$3 million for Preserve America. The Senate Committee recommended \$1 million for Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

On Thursday the 29th, the full Appropriations Committee marked up the Interior spending bill (among others) and supported the Subcommittee's recommendation. The Senate Committee rejected the President's proposal to move National Heritage Areas funding from the National Park Service to the Historic Preservation Fund as a competitive grant program. National Heritage Areas received \$14,115,000 (\$814,000 more than last year) and the President's Advisory Council on Historic Preservation received their requested amount, \$5,118,000.

Senate Interior appropriations discussions this year focused on the state of tribal health and education issues, clean water program funding, and support for energy production. Historic preservation was not discussed at either mark up, but appropriations staff say the Historic Preservation Fund grant programs' popularity (both Save America's Treasures and Preserve America) led to the higher appropriations for those programs relative to the House recommendation.

At the June 29 full Committee mark up, Senator Byron Dorgan (D-ND), Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Interior and Related Agencies noted that over the next two years, \$1.5 billion will be cut from his subcommittee's allocation, that is, the amount of money designated in the budget for spending in this area. In this context, he said, "it's hard not to do serious injury."