

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 15, 2008

The Honorable Dave Obey
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations
H-218 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jerry Lewis
Ranking Republican Member
House Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Norman D. Dicks
Chairman
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior
and Environment
B-308 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Todd Tiahrt
Ranking Republican Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior
and Environment
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Obey, Ranking Member Lewis, Chairman Dicks, and Ranking Member Tiahrt:

As you work to draft the Fiscal Year 2009 Interior and Environment Appropriations bill, we are writing to respectfully request full funding for the Civil War Battlefield Preservation Program (CWBPP) at its authorized level of \$10 million from the National Park Service's Land Acquisition and State Assistance account.

The Civil War Sites Advisory Commission, a blue-ribbon panel established by Congress in the early 1990s, recommended in 1993 that Congress establish a \$10 million-a-year emergency program to save priority Civil War battlefields outside National Park Service (NPS) boundaries. Over the past 15 years, the sense of urgency to preserve these sites has only grown as some of the most historically significant battlefields in the nation remain unprotected.

Congress has responded to this challenge, first appropriating money for the program in Fiscal Year 1999. Since then, CWBPP has been used to save nearly 15,000 acres of hallowed ground in fifteen states, including properties associated with some of the most renowned battlefields in American history. Pieces of history that have been saved for future generations include Antietam, Maryland; Bentonville, North Carolina; Chancellorsville, Virginia; Corinth, Mississippi, Franklin, Tennessee; Harpers Ferry, West Virginia; Perryville, Kentucky; and Prairie Grove, Arkansas. These battlefields represent some of the notable successes of the CWBPP; however, more work must be done.

CWBPP is a unique program that encourages state, local, and private investment in battlefield preservation. It is fully consistent with congressional goals of encouraging cooperative cost-sharing partnerships with state and local governments and non-profit organizations; protecting private property rights by limiting land acquisitions to willing sellers only; promoting heritage tourism in many regions of the nation; and limiting the burgeoning NPS maintenance backlog, since non-federal entities are responsible for the long-term maintenance of sites not within NPS boundaries. CWBPP has been successful in utilizing its congressional appropriations to leverage state and local government and private sector funding, and it is vital that Congress continue to support CWBPP to ensure thousands of more acres of hallowed ground may be preserved and protected.

Although CWBPP is authorized at \$10 million annually, it has only received an average of \$3.6 million a year since Fiscal Year 1999. Full federal funding at the authorized level is needed to adequately protect these sites and preserve our history for future generations. Especially as we prepare our nation for the upcoming 150th anniversary commemoration of the Civil War, a full appropriation of \$10 million in Fiscal Year 2009 is critical to building upon the remarkable success of this program.

As such, we respectfully request that the House Appropriations Committee and the Interior and Environment Subcommittee appropriate the full authorization of \$10 million for the Civil War Battlefield Preservation Program in Fiscal Year 2009. Thank you in advance for your consideration of this important program.

Sincerely,

Byrd Miller
Paul Longrey
Robin Hayes
Mary Bono Mack
Chip Pickering
Tommy Swartz
John P. Salmon
Todd R. Platts
Robert J. Wether

Bob Jordan
Mike Ren
Chris G. Jones
Jim Orr
Chris Cooper P. Case
Jim Woodall
Steve Cohen
Wayne E. Boy
John Boozma

Ann
(TX-02)

Frank Lucas K-3

Leonard L. Brown

Zach Wamp

~~John~~

Bob Allen

John Randall

Paul Smith

Nancy Boyda

Kon Kind

Phil English

Ellen Stauscher

Powers

Edward J. Morley

Nathan Deal

John

Ellyde Zimmerman

Wayne T. Gelchert

Karl Blumenauer

Don

Alan B. Mellore

Elton Saffly

Coralyn B. Mabey

Jim Oberstar

Mike McDermott

Jim Van Halle