

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 7936

To prepare the National Park Service for America’s Semiquincentennial by reevaluating and recommitting to efforts to protect and sustain the resiliency of our Nation’s cultural resources for the enjoyment, wellbeing, and education of all present and future generations.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 10, 2024

Mr. TONKO introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

A BILL

To prepare the National Park Service for America’s Semiquincentennial by reevaluating and recommitting to efforts to protect and sustain the resiliency of our Nation’s cultural resources for the enjoyment, wellbeing, and education of all present and future generations.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Cultural Resource
5 Challenge Act of 2024”.

1 **SEC. 2. NATIONAL PARKS SERVICE CULTURAL RESOURCE**

2 **CHALLENGE.**

3 (a) REQUIREMENTS.—The Director of the National
4 Park Service (hereafter in this Act referred to as the “Di-
5 rector”) shall enhance cultural resources work within the
6 National Park System, including—

7 (1) reviewing, updating, and improving access
8 to National Park Service guidance for cultural re-
9 source identification, management, maintenance,
10 preservation, restoration, and documentation,
11 digitization, interpretation, communication, edu-
12 cation;

13 (2) advancing the identification, management,
14 maintenance, preservation, restoration, and docu-
15 mentation, digitization, interpretation, communica-
16 tion, education of cultural resources within the Na-
17 tional Park System;

18 (3) assessing gaps in the National Park Sys-
19 tem, National Historic Landmarks, and the National
20 Register of Historic Places programs regarding sites
21 related to underrepresented groups and resource
22 types, and identify and implement strategies and ini-
23 tiatives for their inclusion;

24 (4) identifying and filling critical workforce va-
25 cancies within parks, the regions, and the Wash-

1 ington Support Office to ensure an effective and effi-
2 cient program of cultural resource management;

3 (5) encouraging skill-sharing between parks and
4 regional offices, and external groups to meet critical
5 training needs and facilitate cross-learning;

6 (6) providing relevant training and technical
7 guidance to State Historic Preservation Offices,
8 Tribal Historic Preservation Offices, National Herit-
9 age Area System units, certified local governments,
10 Federal preservation officers, government agencies,
11 and others;

12 (7) promoting an interdisciplinary research ap-
13 proach to addressing critical resource management
14 issues, including climate change, sustainability, and
15 geographic information system standards, including
16 through increased coordination between cultural and
17 natural resource research and science programs; and

18 (8) other projects or programs as determined
19 appropriate by the Director.

20 (b) PROGRESS.—No later than 1 year after the date
21 of enactment of this Act, the Director shall submit to Con-
22 gress, an update on the progress meeting requirements
23 under subsection (a).

1 **SEC. 3. CULTURAL RESOURCE CHALLENGE RESILIENCE**
2 **GRANT PROGRAM.**

3 (a) **PLANNING GRANTS.**—

4 (1) **AWARDS.**—The Director shall carry out a
5 program of awarding grants to assist eligible entities
6 in the preparation of an application for a grant
7 under subsection (b), including community engage-
8 ment, project planning and design, and capacity.

9 (2) **AMOUNT.**—The amount of a grant under
10 paragraph (1), with respect to any organization
11 seeking such a grant shall not exceed \$75,000.

12 (b) **PROGRAM AND PROJECT GRANTS.**—

13 (1) **AWARDS.**—The Director shall carry out a
14 program of awarding grants, on a competitive basis,
15 to improve the resiliency of our Nation’s cultural re-
16 sources, including by—

17 (A) advancing the identification, manage-
18 ment, maintenance, preservation, restoration,
19 and documentation, digitization, interpretation,
20 communication, education of cultural resources,
21 including supporting baseline research;

22 (B) creating or supporting the operation of
23 integrated data systems that maximize the ac-
24 cessibility of cultural resource inventory, evalua-
25 tion, documentation, and treatment informa-
26 tion;

1 (C) providing relevant training and tech-
2 nical guidance to State Historic Preservation
3 Offices, Tribal Historic Preservation Offices,
4 National Heritage Area System units, certified
5 local governments, Federal preservation offi-
6 cers, government agencies, and others; and

7 (D) implementing other relevant projects
8 or programs as determined appropriate by the
9 Director.

10 (2) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—To be eligible for a
11 grant under this Act, and entity shall be, or be
12 partnered with, a State, Local, Tribal, territorial
13 government, an educational institution, a Tribal his-
14 toric preservation office, a State historic preserva-
15 tion office, or a non-profit organization.

16 (3) COST-SHARE.—The Federal share of a
17 grant awarded under the Program may not exceed
18 80 percent of total cost of the project.

19 (4) WAIVER FOR COST-SHARE REQUIREMENT.—
20 The Director may waive the limitation in paragraph
21 (3) for certain projects—

22 (A) that are in collaboration with Tribal
23 Historic Preservation Offices, federally recog-
24 nized Indian Tribes, or Native Hawaiian orga-
25 nizations; and

1 (B) with minimal costs under \$10,000.

2 (c) PRIORITIZATION.—In awarding the grants under
3 this section, the Secretary shall prioritize projects that—

4 (1) consider and address the role of climate
5 change in protecting our Nation’s cultural resources;

6 (2) expand and improve support to Native
7 American, Native Hawaiian, and Alaskan Natives,
8 minority, and other underrepresented groups in-
9 volved in national historic preservation programs
10 and the preservation of their culture;

11 (3) support or engage storytelling and oral his-
12 tory to support intangible heritage and knowledge;
13 and

14 (4) incorporate an effort to engage and em-
15 power future generations in historic preservation,
16 history, and archeology programs.

17 **SEC. 4. CULTURAL RESOURCES CAREER ACADEMY.**

18 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Director shall develop a com-
19 prehensive Cultural Resource Career Academy curriculum
20 to provide cultural resource management training to all
21 park managers and staff with responsibilities for man-
22 aging and preserving cultural resources. In developing this
23 curriculum, the Director shall include training on—

24 (1) the role of climate change in protecting our
25 Nation’s cultural resources;

1 (2) best practices for the preservation of cul-
2 tural resources from Native American, minority, and
3 other underrepresented communities, including cul-
4 tural competency for community engagement;

5 (3) how storytelling and oral history can sup-
6 port intangible heritage and knowledge; and

7 (4) best practices for how to engage the next
8 and future generations in historic and cultural re-
9 source preservation, reflection, and celebration.

10 (b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—In addi-
11 tion to amounts otherwise available, there is appropriated
12 to the Director for fiscal year 2025, out of any money
13 in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated, \$20,000,000
14 to remain available until expended, to carry out subsection
15 (a).

16 **SEC. 5. REPORT TO CONGRESS.**

17 Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment
18 of this Act, the Director shall submit to Congress, and
19 release to the public, a report on the progress of carrying
20 out this Act. The report shall include—

21 (1) a summary of the status projects and pro-
22 grams undertaken or implemented;

23 (2) explanation for how National Park Service
24 offices have coordinated and prioritized efforts to ad-
25 vance management of cultural resources; and

1 (3) an explanation of how the Director selected
2 grants using the criteria in section 3.

3 **SEC. 6. STATE OF OUR CULTURAL RESOURCES REPORT.**

4 (a) CONTENT.—Not later than 4 years after the date
5 of enactment of this Act, the Advisory Council on Historic
6 Preservation, in collaboration with the Director, shall com-
7 plete and publish a report on the State of the cultural
8 resources of the United States, including—

9 (1) a summary of relevant documents and guid-
10 ance prepared by the National Park Service for the
11 management of cultural resources;

12 (2) a summary of efforts to protect cultural
13 heritage from the impacts of climate-related risks;

14 (3) an assessment of remaining cultural re-
15 sources workforce and workforce gaps of the Na-
16 tional Park Service;

17 (4) needs for future funding; and

18 (5) a summary of partnerships between the Na-
19 tional Park Service and other agencies and entities
20 to restore, protect, and promote the cultural re-
21 sources of the United States.

22 (b) EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT.—In writing the report
23 required under subsection (a), the Director and the Advi-
24 sory Council on Historic Preservation shall engage with,

1 credit, and compensate necessary relevant external ex-
2 perts.

3 **SEC. 7. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be appro-
5 priated to the Secretary to carry out this Act
6 \$250,000,000 for fiscal years 2025 through 2030.

7 (b) LIMITATION ON USE OF FUNDS.—No funds made
8 available for this Act may be—

9 (1) taken from the existing and future Historic
10 Preservation Fund;

11 (2) used to acquire lands or interest in lands by
12 the Federal Government; or

13 (3) used for projects involving demolition of cul-
14 tural resources.

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