

Historic and Cultural Preservation



As part of the inherent rights of self-governance and self-determination, tribes directly manage preservation, maintenance, and revitalization efforts to maintain culture and traditions. Tribal nations also have the rights to control their ancestors' remains and sacred cultural items.

Key Recommendations

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Interior, Environment Appropriations Bill

Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA)

- Provide \$4 million for Section 10 of NAGPRA, and create a line-item for grants for the purpose of working with culturally unidentifiable remains.

Section 10 of NAGPRA authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to award grants to museums, Indian tribes, and Native Hawaiian organizations for the purposes of assisting in consultation, documentation, and repatriation of Native American human remains and cultural items. Over the



past few years, the National Park Service's NAGPRA program has used a high percentage of funds from the Section 10 grant program to cover its administrative costs, resulting in fewer dollars going to the tribes. Further, in the report released in July 2010 assessing NAGPRA compliance on the 20th anniversary since enactment, the Government Accountability Office determined that "key federal agencies still have not fully complied with the act."^{xv} Additionally, during FY2010, many tribes were denied funding because of inadequate federal funding.^{xvi} Tribes should receive priority in Section 10 grant awards, and a separate line-item should be created to fund work specifically addressing culturally unidentifiable remains.

- Provide a 10 percent increase for investigations into failure to comply with NAGPRA, and create a line-item for investigations of museum complaints made by tribes.

The number of tribal complaints related to museums failing to comply with NAGPRA has grown exponentially in the past few years, and the department is unable to respond to the tribes in a timely manner. Dedicated funding for investigations of tribal complaints is essential for the spirit of NAGPRA to be fully implemented.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Interior, Environment Appropriations Bill

Tribal Historic Preservation Officer Program

- Provide \$15 million for the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer Program.

In the 1992 amendments to the National Historic Preservation Act, tribes were authorized to assume historic preservation activities and responsibilities with respect to Indian lands via the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) program. This program is operated by the National Park Service and is funded by the Historic Preservation Fund. It is estimated that there will be at least 100 tribes operating THPO programs in FY2012. To provide a minimum level of services, the offices require an average of \$125,000.

