



History and culture are passed down through Native traditions celebrated in ceremony, art, and place. Historical and cultural preservation must be a priority to ensure that the next generation carries on the traditions and ways of their nations.

Credit: Taths.

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL PRESERVATION

As part of the inherent rights of self-governance and self-determination, tribes directly manage preservation, maintenance, and revitalization efforts in order 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 to fund work with culturally unidentifiable remains.

Section 10 of NAGPRA authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to award grants to museums, tribes, and Native Hawaiian organizations to assist in the consultation, documentation, and repatriation of Native American human remains and cultural items. Over the past few years, the National Park Service NAGPRA program has used a high percentage of funds from the Section 10 grant program to cover their administrative costs, which has resulted in fewer dollars for 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.”³⁴ Additionally, during FY 2010, many tribes were denied funding because of inadequate federal funding.³⁵ Tribes should receive priority in Section 10 grant awards, and a separate line-item should be created to fund work with 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 made about museums failing to comply with NAGPRA has grown exponentially in the past few years, and the Department of the Interior 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.*

The 1992 amendments to the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) authorized tribes to assume historic preservation activities and responsibilities on Indian lands through the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) program. This program is operated by the National Park Service and funded by the Historic Preservation Fund. It is estimated that there will be at least 100 tribes operating Tribal Historic Preservation Officer programs in FY 2013. To provide a minimum level of services, the offices require an average of \$125,000 each. This compels the appropriation of \$15 million for the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer Program.