



SHA Government Affairs Newsletter – July 2020

Homeland Security Gets New Authority to Conduct Surveillance on Protestors

Using the President's Executive Order on Monuments for authority, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is sending armed, camouflage-wearing officers in to major cities, like Portland and Chicago, to prevent possible harm to federal property and to statues and monuments – even if they aren't federally-owned works. DHS also claims authority, based on this Executive Order, to conduct physical surveillance of protesters, monitor their mail, and scrutinize their social media looking for any plans to deface or remove statues and monuments. In response, SHA and the Coalition for American Heritage issued the following statement:

The Society for Historical Archaeology and the Coalition for American Heritage oppose the Trump Administration's dangerous decision to implement the Executive Order on Protecting Monuments, Memorials and Statues (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/executive-order-protecting-american-monuments-memorials-statues-combating-recent-criminal-violence/>) by conducting surveillance on Americans who are protesting to remove some of these historic period monuments, and by characterizing potential damage to monuments as a "significant threat to homeland security." Our organizations are committed to preserving and showcasing America's complex and sometimes painful history. Government surveillance of mostly peaceful protesters undermines an essential element of historic preservation—constructive dialogue about our country's complex history. In our work, this dialogue occurs, and is shared with the public, at our country's historic sites.

In seeking to remove certain monuments, protesters challenge us to question which historic figures we choose to honor, and whose stories merit inclusion, in the public square. We believe that the protests occurring across America are part of an important re-examination of our collective history. We welcome this national conversation about America's past, including difficult topics such as segregation, enslavement, genocide, and disenfranchisement. It is our sincere hope that an open dialogue about America's multifaceted past will guide us in creating a more just, equitable, and inclusive future for all.

We strongly oppose the President's unwarranted characterization of civil rights protests focusing on heritage sites as a national security threat and his use of Department of Homeland Security personnel to collect personal information on protesters. We ask him to immediately revoke this new and dangerous policy.

Take Action to Oppose the Surveillance of Protesters

We encourage members to take action by contacting their members of Congress. Use our helpful tips in e-mailing your Congressional representatives:

- To identify who represents you in Congress, check <https://heritagecoalition.org/find-your-members/>.
- Visit your member's website and look for a "Contact Me" tab that enables you to send an email directly to his/her office.
- If you prefer to call, the Capitol switchboard is 202-224-3121 and you can ask them to connect you to your Member's office.
- Share your home address so that the Member of Congress can confirm that you are a constituent.
- In your message, provide a short explanation of why the President's Executive Order is dangerous and counter-productive. (It's okay to use the same message in contacting your representative and both of our Senators.)

For more information, contact Terry Klein (tklein@srifoundation.org), chair of the Government Affairs Committee of SHA, and Marion Werkheiser (marion@culturalheritagepartners.com) at the Coalition for American Heritage.

Executive Order Creating Statue Garden

President Trump used his July 4th celebration at Mount Rushmore to announce that he was signing an [executive order creating a National Garden of American Heroes](#). The order proposes statues of 28 Americans, among them John Adams, Susan B. Anthony, Davy Crockett, Frederick Douglass, Amelia Earhart, Billy Graham, Martin Luther King, Jr., Abraham Lincoln, Ronald Reagan, Jackie Robinson, Harriet Tubman and George Washington. It also mentions Christopher Columbus and Junipero Serra as possible candidates for inclusion. No Native Americans or Latinos are included in the list of possibilities.

According to the order, all statues would have to be realistic and lifelike – nothing abstract or modern. The order also calls for strict punishments (a decade in prison) for protestors who damage Trump's statues garden. The order also establishes an inter-agency task force whose membership includes the Chairs of the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

House Passes Great American Outdoors Act

The U.S. House of Representatives passed the [Great American Outdoors Act](#), a bill to provide full and permanent funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund and to provide \$20 billion for deferred maintenance needs at America's national parks. The passage of this bill is a major bipartisan success, and it will provide critical aid for preserving historic resources across the country.

The bill passed by a vote of 310-107. Because the U.S. Senate has already passed the same bill, it now goes to the president for his signature.

President Trump Announces Rollback of NEPA Regulations

The Trump Administration has released the final version of its new regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). SHA is concerned about many of the changes to NEPA implementation, including:

1. Fewer actions will be subject to NEPA review;
2. The ability of the public to raise concerns about effects is reduced;
3. The types of effects to be considered by the agencies are limited;
4. Arbitrary timelines and page limits may reduce consideration of cultural resource impacts; and
5. The regulations introduce confusing new terms that will invite litigation and delay projects, the opposite of what the Administration says it intends with these new rules.

For additional details on the worrisome impacts this regulatory rollback will have, please see the Coalition's Fact Sheet on NEPA Changes: <https://heritagecoalition.org/nepa-regulatory-rollback-top-concerns-about-impacts-on-historic-resources/>

Call to Action – Contact Congress re: Changes to NEPA Regulations

SHA asks all members to contact their members of Congress about the harm to historic resources that will occur because of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulatory rollback. Use our helpful tips in calling or e-mailing your Congressional representatives:

- To identify who represents you in Congress, check <https://heritagecoalition.org/find-your-members/>.
- Visit your member's website and look for a "Contact Me" tab that enables you to send an email directly to his/her office.
- If you prefer to call, the Capitol switchboard is 202/224-3121 and you can ask them to connect you to your Member's office.
- Share your home address so that the Member of Congress can confirm that you are a constituent.
- In your message, provide a short explanation of how the NEPA regulatory rollback will likely impact your work and why you care about the issue. (It's okay to use the same message in contacting your representative and both of our senators.)
- Ask your Representative to cosponsor [HConRes 89](#), legislation that asks the Trump Administration to reverse ongoing administrative actions to weaken NEPA and its protections for American communities.

Communities can stay informed of developments through the Coalition for American Heritage's website (www.heritagecoalition.org). To sign up for the Coalition's e-newsletter, join as an individual member at <https://heritagecoalition.org/for-individuals/>. Follow the Coalition's work on social media (LinkedIn or @heritagecoalition on Facebook and Twitter).

House Voting to Increase Funding for the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF)

The U.S. House of Representatives voted to increase funding for the HPF by almost \$18 million compared to last year. The bill provides:

- \$136,425,000 for HPF
- \$25 million for Save America's Treasures
- \$1 million for underrepresented communities grants
- \$22.25 for grants honoring Civil Rights movement
- \$10 million Historically Black Colleges and Universities
- \$7.5 for restoring sites of national, state, local significance
- \$7.4 million for the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation

The U.S. Senate has yet to approve its version of the funding bill for the Department of the Interior. Once both chambers pass funding legislation, they will need to negotiate any discrepancies in the numbers before final passage of the legislation.

House Passes Infrastructure Bill

The House passed its \$1.5 trillion infrastructure plan. President Trump threatened to veto it because it doesn't eliminate or reduce environmental reviews. The bill, called the [Moving Forward Act](#), includes \$300 billion for repairing bridges and roads, over \$100 billion for low-income schools, \$100 billion for new public transit, \$100 billion for broadband, and \$70 billion for clean energy projects.

Director of Bureau of Land Management Formally Nominated to the Position

William Perry Pendley was formally nominated by President Trump to head the Bureau of Land Management. He has been acting in the role since July 2019. His appointment is controversial because Pendley has also previously called for the federal government to sell off its vast landholdings. The Bureau of Land Management oversees more federal land than any other agency. Pendley also oversaw BLM's move of its headquarters out to Colorado. That move caused many BLM employees to leave the agency or opt for early retirement.

Montana Governor Steve Bullock filed a lawsuit challenging Pendley's authority, arguing federal law prohibits acting directors from serving while their nomination is pending. Perry Pendley's nomination is now awaiting a vote in the U.S. Senate.

Have You Requested Your Absentee Ballot?

Fewer than 100 days remain before the November election, now is a great time to ensure that you have submitted a request to vote by mail. Log in to www.vote.org, a non-partisan site, for help checking your registration, requesting an absentee ballot, or finding your polling place.

How You Can Get Involved

For additional information on SHA's advocacy efforts, please sign up for email alerts from the Coalition for American Heritage at <https://heritagecoalition.org/for-individuals/> and follow the Coalition on Facebook at @heritagecoalition and on LinkedIn at

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/coalition-for-american-heritage/>. You'll get Calls to Action with sample scripts for emailing/calling your Member of Congress. You will also receive information on how to send a comment letter to federal agencies and examples of what you may choose to say.

Also, please consider joining SHA's Government Affairs Committee! Given increasing threats (to both terrestrial and underwater sites) from the current Administration, your involvement is critical. If interested, please contact Terry Klein at tklein@srifoundation.org or Marion Werkheiser (marion@culturalheritagepartners.com). We look forward to working alongside you to advance the protection of our historical archaeological heritage!