



Reject the Language on National Heritage Areas in the President's FY2011 Budget

The Administration's FY2011 Budget imposes new and unjustified language on National Heritage Areas (NHAs), the federal government's most effective public-private partnership for resource conservation and heritage tourism.

- It changes the distribution of the funds to 22 NHAs eliminating authorized funding to those established prior to 2001, and penalizing them for not meeting the yet-to-be-developed set of guidelines by NPS on sustainability.
- It requires many NHAs to meet previously unstated mandates for *self-sufficiency* by February 1, 2010, a deadline announced on that same day, while its own agency has communicated to Congress that it is still developing guidelines for measuring the *sustainability* of heritage areas as required in P.L. 110-229.¹ The undefined self-sufficiency requirement effective on the day the budget was released is a requirement that is impossible to meet.
- It ignores the Second Century Commission's strong recommendations calling for Congress to authorize, clearly define, and base fund a system of National Heritage Areas.
- It circumvents congressional intent and legislative language by changing the funding of many NHAs, contrary to their authorizing legislation.

Support Funding Restoration for the National Heritage Area Program

- The National Heritage Area Program is an effective, high yield investment of federal funds; Heritage Areas match every federal dollar with an average of \$5.50 in leveraged public and private funding.
- **As public-private partnerships that protect nationally significant resources, NHAs are among the most efficient and cost-effective programs within the Department of Interior and the entire federal government. Their success is measured in the enhanced conservation of nationally significant resources along with their economic development benefits to the communities.**
- **NHAs leverage their federal funds to create jobs, generate revenues for local governments and sustain local communities through revitalization and heritage tourism, while furthering the mission of the National Park Service.**
- A new U.S. Cultural and Heritage Tourism Marketing Council and the U.S. Department of Commerce study revealed that cultural heritage travelers contribute more than \$192 billion annually to the U.S. economy.
- NHAs work well in their regions; communities have come to Congress to establish 49 NHAs.
- Each NHA is authorized to receive up to \$1 million annually from the Interior Department.
- The program has been funded between \$15 million and \$17 million per year over the past four years – despite the addition of new designees.

Enact Program Legislation for National Heritage Areas

- ANHA is working with the National Park Service to pursue legislation to mandate a standard approach when Congress designates new National Heritage Areas. It is imperative to have uniformity in the criteria, timeframes for consideration and designation, financial and technical support, and the performance evaluation process for National Heritage Areas.

¹ Congressional Research Service, "Heritage Areas: Background, Proposals, and Current Issues," January 7, 2010, p. 11.