

Dear

As organizations dedicated to the preservation of the natural and cultural heritage resources of the United States, we write today regarding the engagement by the United States in the World Heritage Program. We urge you to ensure that the United States, through the Departments of Interior and State, remains robustly engaged in, and supportive of, the World Heritage Program.

The United States proposed the World Heritage Convention to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1972 and the United States was the first country to ratify the Convention in 1973. In 1978 the United States hosted the second session of the World Heritage Committee and two of the first 12 sites inscribed on the World Heritage List were Yellowstone National Park and Mesa Verde National Park. The United States National Committee of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (US/ICOMOS), is the first and oldest of the 110 ICOMOS national committees, established in 1965,

Today, just 23 of the 1073 properties inscribed on the World Heritage List are in the United States, but more are eligible. Increasing numbers of communities and site stewards throughout the United States continue to pursue and make progress with the Department of the Interior on the World Heritage Tentative List and nominations to the World Heritage List. There are substantial social, cultural and economic benefits to communities and sites in the United States and worldwide that result from inclusion in the World Heritage List. The World Heritage Program builds mutual respect for the cultural and natural heritage and peaceful coexistence of all humanity.

For these reasons we believe it is of critical importance for the United States to remain robustly engaged in and supportive of the World Heritage Program. We are committed to continue to strongly support such efforts.

We urge you to provide funds to both support World Heritage nominations of sites in the United States and contribute payments to the World Heritage Fund in order to demonstrate leadership in, and support for, the important work of ensuring global peace through the mutual respect of heritage of outstanding universal value.

Sincerely,

American Anthropological Association
American Cultural Resources Association
Coalition for American Heritage
ICOMOS IFLA International Scientific Committee on Cultural Landscapes
Preservation Action
Society for American Archaeology
Society for Historical Archaeology
US/ICOMOS (The United States National Committee of the International Council on
Monuments and Sites)