



June 24, 2009

Dear Historic Preservation Caucus Member:

Thank you for your leadership on historic preservation issues. We sincerely appreciate the work you do on our behalf and are thankful for your efforts to preserve the historic heritage of your district. There is an immediate opportunity to help further the preservation movement by helping to pass H.R. 1831, a bill that makes permanent the federal tax incentives for donations of easements.

More widely known as an incentive for the conservation of farmland and natural areas, the easement incentive is also an important part of the historic preservation toolbox. From imperiled structures in America's towns and cities to the rural legacy of our Civil War battlefields, this tax provision encourages property owners to donate perpetual easements that ensure these treasures will survive for future generations.

There are often strong financial incentives for new developments that destroy the historic character of our communities. Federal tax benefits can soften the financial blow for a property owner who voluntarily agrees to retire these development rights, but under previous law, property owners with modest incomes received little or no tax benefit for their generous donation. By allowing property owners to carry-over the remaining value of their donation for up to 15 years, this incentive has helped our organizations preserve hundreds of historic treasures across America. The 2006 law also set higher appraisal standards and enacted other needed reforms of conservation easements

We need your help to make this important incentive a permanent part of the tax code. Please join Congressmen Mike Thompson (D-CA), Eric Cantor (R-VA) and 127 other Representatives as a co-sponsor of the Conservation Easement Incentive Act. To sign-on please contact Jonathan Birdsong in Rep. Thompson's Office (5-3311) or Wyatt Stewart in Rep. Cantor's Office (5-2815).

Thank you for your continued commitment to safeguarding the special places so important to America's historic heritage.

Sincerely,

American Cultural Resources Association  
Civil War Preservation Trust  
National Association of Preservation Commissioners  
National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers  
National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers  
National Trust for Historic Preservation  
Preservation Action  
Society for Historical Archeology