



H.R. 3981 – PRESERVE AMERICA AND SAVE AMERICA'S TREASURES ACT

FLOOR SITUATION

H.R. 3981 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Brad Miller (D-NC) on October 29, 2007. The House Committee on Natural Resources agreed to the bill, as amended, by voice vote on June 11, 2008.

H.R. 3981 is expected to be considered on the floor of the House on July 8, 2008.

SUMMARY

H.R. 3981 establishes the Preserve America Program and the Save America's Treasures Program within the Department of the Interior and administered by the National Park Service.

Preserve America Program

The Preserve America Program, which is to be administered by the National Park Service in partnership with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, provides competitive grants to entities designated as Preserve America Communities. To be eligible for designation as a Preserve America Community, a community must submit an application to the Council. These grants include funding to States, local governments, and Indian tribes, for use towards the research and documentation of a community's history. Such research may include surveying the historic resources of a community, creating educational programs about the history of communities, and projects to support heritage tourism in areas designated as Preserve America Communities.

The bill includes a cost sharing requirement, under which the non-federal share of costs related to the project is not to be less than half of the total cost of the project. The non-Federal share of project funding may be in the form of cash or donated supplies and related services at a value to be determined by the Secretary.

The bill authorizes \$25 million for the Preserve America Program for fiscal years 2009-2013.

Save America's Treasures Program

The Save America's Treasures Program is also established within the Department of the Interior. The Program provides competitive grants for the preservation of nationally significant artifact collections and historic properties that are endangered, listed as nationally significant in the National Register of Historic places, or have been designated as a National Historic Landmark. When awarding grants, the bill allows the Secretary of the Interior to give preference to projects that carry out the purposes of the Save America's Treasures and Preserve America Programs.

H.R. 3981 also includes a cost sharing requirement which states that the non-federal share of project costs must be no less than fifty percent of the total cost. Additionally, the Secretary must provide Congress with notice of any programs that are to be provided grants under the program no less than thirty days before the grants is to be made.

H.R. 3981 authorizes \$50 million annually for an indefinite period of time.

BACKGROUND

Preserve America is a cooperative initiative between the White House and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation that recognizes communities that protect and celebrate their historical heritage and assets. Communities that are designated as a Preserve America Community are categorized as large



cities, local municipalities or towns, or tribes. These Communities receive benefits such as White House recognition and a Preserve America Community road sign.

There are three main criteria which a community must meet in order to qualify for designation as a Preserve America Community: 1) The community has recently supported a historic or cultural preservation project that has promoted and/or is promoting heritage tourism or otherwise fostering economic vitality, and involved a public-private partnership between government entities and at least one civic association, non-profit, and/or business enterprise; 2) the governing body of the community has adopted a resolution indicating its commitment to the preservation of its heritage assets; and 3) the community meets at least five criteria specified in three broad categories: discovering heritage through historic places, protecting historic resources, and promoting historic assets.

According to the [Preserve America.gov website](http://PreserveAmerica.gov), the 2007 federal budget included about \$5 million for grants to support Preserve America Communities, with 72 communities receiving grants for developing resource management strategies and business practices that help preserve and promote historic assets. There are four application and designation cycles that occur annually, with the 2008 application deadlines set at March 1, June 1, September 1, and December 1.

The Save America's Treasures Program is a national effort to protect threatened cultural collections, works of art, maps and journals that relate to the history and culture of the United States. The program was created by an Executive Order of President Clinton in 1998. The program is a public-private partnership which incorporates the National Park Service and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The program administers federal grants through the National Parks System for preservation and conservation projects. These grants are awarded to Federal, state, local, and tribal government entities, and non-profit organizations. The Save America's Treasures Program is currently co-chaired by First Lady Laura Bush, author Susan Eisenhower, and President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation William Moe.

COST

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that "implementing H.R. 3981 would cost \$300 million over the 2009-2013 period."

[Full CBO cost estimate for H.R. 3981](#)

STAFF CONTACT

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