

**Statement of Emily Wadhams, Vice President for Public Policy
National Trust for Historic Preservation**

on

**H.R. 3981 – the Preserve America and
Save America’s Treasures Act**

**House Natural Resources Committee
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands
The Honorable Raul M. Grijalva, Chairman**

**April 24^h, 2008
1334 Longworth House Office Building
10:00 A.M.**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, good morning. My name is Emily Wadhams and I am the Vice President for Public Policy for the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Before I begin, I would like to thank you for your tremendous leadership in the protection of America's historic and cultural resources – particularly in your efforts to make permanent the National Landscape Conservation System. As you know, the NLCS represents the crown jewels of the nation's heritage assets on BLM lands and the Trust is immensely grateful to you for seeking to authorize the Conservation System.

For more than 50 years, the National Trust has been helping to protect the nation's historic resources as a Congressionally chartered, private, nonprofit membership organization dedicated to protecting the irreplaceable. Recipient of the National Humanities Medal, the Trust provides leadership, education, and advocacy to save America's diverse historic places and revitalize communities. With over a quarter-million members and thousands of local community groups in all 50 states, the Trust is the leader of a vigorous preservation movement that is saving the best of our past for the future. Its mission has expanded since its founding in 1949 just as the need for historic preservation has grown. When historic buildings and neighborhoods are torn down or allowed to deteriorate, we not only lose a part of our past forever, we also lose a chance to revitalize our communities.

I am here to speak to you today about H.R. 3981 that would authorize both the Preserve America (PA) and Save America's Treasures (SAT) programs. The National Trust supports this measure and is grateful to Reps. Miller and Turner for their leadership in sponsoring the bill. Let me say from the outset that, while each of these historic preservation initiatives apply to projects of a different nature – SAT for “bricks and mortar” preservation and PA for heritage education and outreach – it is important that they should be mutually supportive of each other to maximize federal resources and goals in saving the nation's historic assets. I am particularly pleased that certain provisions in the bill would foster and encourage this partnership where it is suitable.

We already know that PA and SAT are working together at specific locations throughout the country. Other witnesses ably apprised you of the Administration's program, but since the National Trust is the leading private sector partner in SAT, my statement will focus on the latter. It is correct to assume that a very large inventory of SAT bricks and mortar recipients would benefit greatly from Preserve America awards that provide funds for the planning process needed to qualify for SAT support and essential education and outreach activities to increase the value of a SAT-funded restoration. This relationship between both programs heightens the power of Federal funding to leverage additional resources and enable history to come alive through the natural relationship between preservation of buildings or artifacts and informing the public about these resources.

SAT was established a decade ago to celebrate the millennium and highlight the importance of history in marking the 21st century. With broad bi-partisan support in Congress and the leadership of two First Ladies, initiated by the Clinton Administration and continued in the Bush Administration, SAT has provided more than \$264 million in

federal challenge grants to 1,024 historic preservation projects through 2007. These funds have helped bring new life to irreplaceable historic treasures – including buildings, documents and works of art – in every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Midway Islands. Each dollar from Washington is matched one-for-one by non-Federal contributions in all of these projects. Arizona has received nearly \$2.8 million in SAT funding since the program began and I would like to call particular attention to a great project, the restoration of the magnificent 1783 San Xavier del Bac Mission. SAT helped make much of this possible with a 2004 grant of \$250,000.

Creative partnerships are SAT's backbone and enable it to leverage millions of additional dollars from foundations, corporations and individuals – this has literally made the difference in saving hundreds of historic sites and collections around the country. The original thinking behind the program was that raising public awareness and new resources for nationally significant preservation projects would stimulate a response at the state and local levels and inspire people to recognize and support historic and cultural resources in need of preservation/restoration. In recognition of its success in fulfilling that mission, in 2007, the American Architectural Foundation presented its prestigious Keystone Award to the Save America's Treasures partnership for its extraordinary efforts to protect and preserve the architectural, artistic, and cultural legacy of the United States.

With all of its tremendous success and support, however, SAT is unauthorized and funded from year-to-year through the annual appropriations process. The National Trust would like to see Congress authorize SAT and PA with a long-term programmatic and funding vision that would enable both programs to work in harmony with the other components of the national historic preservation program. Authorization would codify the successful implementation and practices of a ten-year old initiative along with its newer partner, and I think that this is a step in the right direction. While much has been achieved since SAT was established, the need remains great and we must look to future needs. In just the first eight years of the program, 2,702 grant applications were received, representing requests for more than \$1.17 billion in critical preservation assistance. SAT funds have made a huge difference, but without Congress' ongoing commitment to the program, it would be virtually impossible to stimulate private matching contributions and hard to imagine where else the money would come from to preserve our national heritage.

I would like to highlight some of SAT's very timely contributions to historic preservation projects that are now receiving a lot of attention from Congress related to the National Park Service (NPS) and some renewed attention to these places resulting from the upcoming centennial. SAT has provided tremendous benefit to iconic NPS sites such as Ellis Island, Valley Forge, Gettysburg, Thomas Edison's Invention Factory, Mesa Verde, Eleanor Roosevelt's Val-Kill Cottage, Longfellow House, Boston's African Meeting House and Dr. Martin Luther King's Ebenezer Baptist Church. More than 20 percent of SAT's private funding – nearly \$12 million – has been designated for NPS historic resources in dire need of support beyond what Congress can provide. This virtually matches SAT's federal support for our national park system. In addition, more than \$7 million in SAT matching grants has been awarded to over 30 nationally significant

religious sites, including Boston's famed Old North Church, Touro Synagogue in Rhode Island and Socorro Mission in Texas.

The Save America's Treasures program helps ensure that our legacy from the past will remain intact so that future generations can live with it, learn from it, and be inspired by it. Its benefits are clearly visible in cities, towns and rural areas all over America and it continues to be one of the most tangible ways that Members of Congress can get directly involved in local preservation projects. Authorizing SAT will help ensure that this program will continue to have a prominent role in preserving America's historic and cultural treasures. In fact, both SAT and PA reflect the bipartisan commitment that has characterized historic preservation policy in Congress and the White House over the years. SAT was created during a Democratic administration and embraced by the Bush Administration and Congressional Republicans. Likewise, PA was created during a Republican administration and is now supported by Members on both sides of the aisle. This is the strongest signal that authorizing both programs makes sense when bipartisanship is sometimes an elusive quality.

The following statistics and examples show why Save America's Treasures – both its public and private sides – has become one of the most valued and successful preservation partnerships in history. With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I am attaching to my written remarks a more comprehensive description with statistical information of SAT's benefits nationwide. Thank you.

Attachment: Save America's Treasures – Program Overview