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Interior Deputy Secretary Lynn Scarlett Testifies on Preserve America and Save America Treasures

WASHINGTON, DC – Deputy Secretary of the Interior Lynn Scarlett today asked the Senate Energy and Natural Resources National Parks Subcommittee to authorize the Preserve America and Save America’s Treasures programs.

“The results are clear.” Deputy Secretary Scarlett said at the hearing. “Both programs have demonstrated significant on-the-ground success in fostering preservation partnerships, leveraging private dollars with public funds, and sustaining efficient resource management strategies and sound business practices in the preservation of our heritage assets.”

If enacted, the Preserve America and Save America’s Treasures Act (S. 2262) would, for the first time, formally codify the Preserve America and Save America’s Treasures programs. Both are grant programs that were started through Presidential Executive Orders. Formal congressional authorization of the two programs would work to ensure their long-term viability.

Administered by the Department of the Interior in cooperation with other federal agencies including the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, and the Institute of Museum and Library Sciences, the programs have operated without congressional authorization since their inception.

Preserve America fosters reuse and interpretation of cultural resources that form the social, educational, and economic fabric of communities. Preserve America grants complement the Save America’s Treasures grant program, which funds “brick and mortar” improvements to historic structures and assets, by providing competitive grants to encourage sustainable historic resources management through heritage tourism.

“Save America’s Treasures and Preserve America Grants have been important to communities across the nation that use their heritage resources as key components of their economic futures,” John L. Nau, III, chairman, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, said of the programs. “Sustainable preservation is a wise investment that returns many times its original cost, and is

precisely the sort of strategy that Congress should encourage as we seek to make our communities better places to live and work.”

“We’re very appreciative today of Ranking Member Senator Pete Domenici along with Senator Hillary Clinton for introducing the bill and to Chairman Bingaman for cosponsoring this bill along with the other co-sponsors. We particularly appreciate Senator Akaka and Senator Burr for holding today’s hearing on S. 2262.” said Scarlett.

In addition to nearly a dozen other federal agencies, the Department of the Interior and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation are two of the key federal agencies that partner with the White House on the Preserve America initiative. Launched in 2003, Preserve America is an interagency initiative that encourages and supports community efforts to preserve and enjoy the country’s priceless cultural and natural heritage. The goals of the initiative include a greater shared knowledge about the nation’s past, strengthened regional identities and local pride, increased local participation in preserving the country’s cultural and natural heritage assets and support for the economic vitality of communities. More information can be found at www.PreserveAmerica.gov.

Save America’s Treasures was originally founded as the centerpiece of the White House National Millennium Commemoration and as a public-private partnership that included the White House, the National Park Service and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Launched by in 1998 President Clinton, Save America’s Treasures works to protect cultural treasures, including historic structures, collections, and other items related to the historic and culture of our nation. Please visit <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/treasures/> for more information.

-www.preserveamerica.gov-