

**SOCIETY OF
ARCHITECTURAL
HISTORIANS**

11 December 2019

The Honorable Raul Grijalva
Chairman
U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rob Bishop
Ranking Member
U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources
1329 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Deb Haaland
Chairman
U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources,
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and
Public Lands
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Don Young
Ranking Member
U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources,
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and
Public Lands
1329 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: support for HR 3824, Cahokia Mounds Mississippian Culture National Historical Park Act.

Dear Chairman Grijalva, Ranking Member Bishop, Chairman Haaland and Ranking Member Young:

The Society of Architectural Historians (SAH) offers its support for HR 3824, Cahokia Mounds Mississippian Culture National Historical Park Act. This bill provides for the establishment of the Cahokia Mounds Mississippian Culture National Historical Park in Collinsville, Illinois; Monroe, Madison, and St. Clair Counties, Illinois; and St. Louis City County, Missouri, as a unit of the National Park System. The area containing the Cahokia Mounds is considered a National Historic Landmark, our nation's highest form of recognition for historic and archaeological sites. UNESCO has identified it as one of only 24 World Heritage Sites within the United States, placing it alongside such treasures as Yellowstone National Park, Monticello, and the Statue of Liberty. This designation acknowledges the extreme significance of the mounds, both as unique archaeological resources and as physical representatives of what was once the largest urban center in North America. Cahokia is familiarly known as "America's First City" and, at its peak, encompassed nearly six square miles of land occupied by approximately 100,000 people. Its temple mounds are only the most visible of its resources, as the archaeological deposits surrounding these monumental structures have produced and continue to produce enormously important information about the site, its residents, and the Mississippian culture. As well-deserved as its inclusion in our nation's list of National Historic Landmarks and its identification as one of UNESCO's World Heritage Sites are, these are honorary designations and lack protective value. Passage of HR 3824 is essential to the survival of this extraordinary place. The proposed bill would provide important protections to the sites not included in the existing World Heritage nomination or the existing state and National Register listings. The proposed bill creates a national park unit that includes these satellite sites, and extending much needed recognition and protection to them.

We, as architectural historians from across the nation, would like to add our voices in support of this critical legislation. Cahokia Mounds is a vitally important cultural resource. Making it a national park would raise its profile nation-wide and encourage the public to deepen their understanding of the role the Mississippian people played in our nation's history.

The United States is fortunate to possess a wealth of significant archaeological sites, architectural resources, and cultural landscapes that embody our unique national history. The Society of Architectural Historians requests that you pass HR 3824 and support the preservation of Cahokia Mounds. The preservation of Cahokia Mounds is essential so that future generations may appreciate this landmark.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of the letters 'B', 'C', and 'G' in a stylized, cursive font, followed by a horizontal line.

Bryan Clark Green, Ph.D., LEED AP BD+C
Chair, Society of Architectural Historians Heritage Conservation Committee

cc: Mr. Kenneth Breisch, Ph.D.; Mr. Jeffrey Cody, Ph.D.; Mr. Anthony Cohn, AIA; Mr. David Fixler, FAIA; Mr. Sandy Isenstadt, Ph.D.; Mr. Theodore H. Prudon, Ph.D., FAIA, Ms. Pauline Saliga; Ms. Deborah Slaton; Members, SAH Heritage Conservation Committee.