

Testimony of Nicholas A. Redding
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Before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Natural Resources,
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands,
Concerning H.R. 4494, *Frederick Jobs and Historic Preservation Training Center
Land Acquisition Act*

November 9, 2021

Chairman Grijalva, Ranking Member Westerman, and other distinguished members of the Subcommittee, my name is Nicholas Redding, and I am the President and CEO of Preservation Maryland. Since 1931, we have been the statewide voice for historic preservation that works tirelessly to protect the places, stories, and communities in Maryland that matter. In 2018, we launched a national program, the *Campaign for Historic Trades*, which aims to support the expansion of training opportunities for historic tradespeople around the nation. The Campaign is a partnership with National Park Service Historic Preservation Training Center – an entity which we support through a variety of methods.

I thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **support of H.R.4494, the Frederick Jobs and Historic Preservation Training Center Land Acquisition Act**, that has been introduced by Representative David Trone (MD-6). This legislation will allow the National Park Service Historic Preservation Training Center located in Frederick, Maryland to acquire nearby land from the City of Frederick to establish a larger historic trades' workforce development training center and workshop, thereby enabling the National Park Service (NPS) to expand its trades' training capacity and more efficiently achieve its mission nationwide. H.R.4494 represents an investment not only in jobs training but also an investment in preserving the physical vestiges of our nation's diverse history from which future generations can learn.

Located in Frederick, Maryland, the Historic Preservation Training Center (HPTC) is a 44-year old program of the NPS which supports the operations of the Service through execution of preservation projects, training of historic tradespeople, and workforce development initiatives. The program represents a critical component of the NPS' ability

to meet the standards and requirements set forth in the National Historic Preservation Act.

Uniquely, the HPTC is a fee-for-service program of the NPS. Positions at the Center are funded through contractual work with park units and partner federal agencies through existing appropriations (ex. Gettysburg National Military Park (GNMP) hires the HPTC to rehab windows in a historic building using existing NPS appropriation to GNMP). As a result, its expansion and acquisition of this land will have no ongoing fiscal impact on the federal budget, and it remains one of the most cost-effective ways to care for federally owned historic resources, as well as train current NPS employees and the next generation of historic tradespeople.

Unfortunately, due to sustainable growth and new initiatives, the HPTC has now outgrown its existing space. In 2018, the Center worked to establish the Traditional Trades Apprenticeship Program, a paid, service-learning experience which provides hands-on training for young adults and recent veterans. The trainees meet in Frederick, Maryland for orientation and then disperse to parks across the country for their service and training. With public and private support, this program is poised to grow significantly to meet the high demand for traditional tradespeople.

Additionally, with the recent passage of the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA), the HPTC's role as a trainer of Park Service tradespeople has become even more important. The current concept is to utilize the HPTC to establish Maintenance Action Teams (MATs) that will then be deployed around the nation to help train existing NPS staff to complete and oversee complex rehabilitation projects. Unfortunately, the ability to deliver on this – which will reduce federal costs – is hampered by the lack of space at the HPTC's current headquarters and training facility.

The far reaching impact of training in the traditional trades has been recognized by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), an independent federal agency that promotes the preservation, enhancement, and productive use of our nation's historic resources. In 2020, the ACHP convened a *Traditional Trades Training Task Force* which adopted a lengthy policy statement on the future of this field. In part, that policy statement explained that:

Traditional trades are critically important to preserving the heritage of our historic built environment for future generations. They also can translate into secure, well-paying jobs that help revitalize communities both physically and economically. Expanding training opportunities and networks in the traditional trades is essential,

and to do so, we must make pathways into this important field more accessible to the American worker.

H.R.4994 builds on the recommendations of the ACHP policy statement and invests in the future of America's historic places, National Parks, and a new generation of traditional tradespeople. Without trained and talented hands – we simply will be unable to maintain our nation's vast, varied, and irreplaceable heritage.

Therefore, I respectfully urge you to advance this legislation as a step towards securing the future of our past.