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TO: The Honorable City Council

FROM: David Whitaker, Director
Legislative Policy Division Staff 

DATE: June 23, 2025

RE: Critical Funding for Federal Historic Preservation Investment

This letter to inform you that The Historic Designation Advisory Board (“HDAB”) has contacted Michigan Congressional Delegation to continue support of critical funding for federal historic perseveration investment to the states through the Historic Preservation Fund. (HPF).

City of Detroit
CITY COUNCIL
HISTORIC DESIGNATION ADVISORY BOARD
218 Coleman A. Young Municipal Center, Detroit, Michigan 48226
Phone: 313.224.3487 Fax: 313.224.4336
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June 17, 2025

Dear Honorable Members of the Michigan Congressional Delegation,

The Historic Designation Advisory Board of the City of Detroit respectfully requests your urgent attention to and continued support of critical funding for federal historic preservation investment to the states through the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF).

Historic preservation is a widely understood field that bridges real estate and history. Through HPF Federal funding, communities of all sizes benefit from local investment in places that matter to them.

Despite being fully funded by Congress in March 2025 through a Continuing Resolution, Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 appropriated dollars for the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) still haven't been released. **In Michigan, this delay threatens the work of our State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), puts historic places at risk, and could halt preservation projects and economic development throughout the state.**

Additionally, the Administration's proposed FY 2026 federal budget would slash the HPF entirely — a devastating blow to Michigan — both in large cities such as Detroit, Grand Rapids, Lansing, Kalamazoo and in smaller communities statewide.

In all of these places, projects are in the pipeline to receive listing in the National Register of Historic Places and federal historic tax credits for investments in National Register-listed properties. **These are projects that are repurposing long-vacant or underutilized historic properties and converting them to affordable and market-rate housing, hotels, commercial spaces and various mixed-uses that will pump new tax dollars into local economies.** *Holding back and eliminating HPF funds could result in staff layoffs at the Michigan Historic Preservation Office, which administers these National Park Service programs at the state level to facilitate the rehabilitation work of real estate developers, non-profits, and homeowners statewide.* Not only are these people, companies and programs rehabilitating and saving our built heritage, they are pumping needed dollars into our local economies by creating local jobs and investing in our neighborhoods and commercial districts. **From 2018 – 2023, the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office approved 110 Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit projects, totaling more than \$1.3 billion in qualified rehabilitation expenses and more than \$1.5 billion in total investment in our state.**

The HPF also provides annual funding to the Michigan State Historic Preservation Office for Certified Local Government (CLG) grant funds. CLG grants have provided critical rehab and project funding to non-profits and local governments – **from cities as large as Detroit to as small as Calumet in the Upper Peninsula. All CLG communities (42 throughout the state) benefit from these dollars, which are awarded in amounts as small as \$1,800 (Jackson historic signage program – 2008) to as large as \$116,950 (Mason Public Library rehabilitation – 2021).** Many important projects in Detroit have received these grants, for repairs to structures on Belle Isle to the Ford Piquette Avenue Plant’s roof repairs. These are small investments with big impacts for all CLG communities.

We urge you to:

- **Immediately release FY25 HPF funding** so states such as Michigan can continue their critical, federally mandated work.
- **Robustly fund the HPF in FY26** to support preservation and rehabilitation projects ahead of our nation’s 250th anniversary and to continue critical investment in historic properties and communities in Michigan.

Please also note, the *HPF is NOT FUNDED* through taxpayer dollars. It is funded through offshore oil leases.

HDAB respectfully urges your action on this matter so these critical investment projects in Detroit and throughout the state will not come to a halt and so staffing at the SHPO is fully maintained to administer these vital programs for all of Michigan’s communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carolyn Carter', with a stylized, cursive script.

Dr. Carolyn Carter, PhD, Chairman
Historic Designation Advisory Board
City of Detroit

cc:

Governor Gretchen Whitmer

Mayor Michael Duggan

Detroit City Council

Quentin Messer, CEO, Michigan Economic Development Corporation

Ryan Schumaker, Michigan State Historic Preservation Officer