October 19, 2021

The Honorable Joe Manchin
Chairman
Energy and Natural Resource Committee
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Barrasso
Ranking Member
Energy and Natural Resource Committee
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Manchin and Ranking Member Barrasso:

The National Trust for Historic Preservation strongly supports President Biden’s nomination of Charles F. Sams III, to the position of Director of the National Park Service. We believe Mr. Sams’s collaborative leadership and executive experience qualifies him to carry out the duties of the Director in ways that will best preserve, enhance, interpret, and responsibly steward our nation’s many historic and cultural resources managed by the National Park Service.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation, a private nonprofit organization, was chartered by Congress in 1949 to “facilitate public participation” in the preservation of our nation’s heritage and to further the historic preservation policy of the United States. See 54 U.S.C. § 312102(a). In addition, the National Trust has been designated by Congress as a member of the federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, which is responsible for working with federal agencies to implement compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Id., §§ 304101(8), 304108(a).

In carrying out these responsibilities, the National Trust is committed to protecting places that represent inclusive historic narrative and effectively extending the benefits of preservation to all types of communities across the country in meaningful ways. In this context, we look forward to the important perspectives that Mr. Sams’s previous experience as Executive Director of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and his support of our nation’s cultural heritage will bring to the NPS Director position, particularly as the first Native American to lead the National Park Service in the agency’s 105-year history.

The National Trust is particularly encouraged by Mr. Sams’s service as a board member and immediate past chair of the Oregon Cultural Trust, a state agency that collects and grants funding for arts and culture in Oregon. The Oregon Cultural
Trust was established in 2001 by the Oregon Legislature as an ongoing funding source for arts and culture across the state. As part of this work, the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office, Oregon Historic Society, and the Oregon Heritage Commission receive annual grants from the Oregon Cultural Trust as three of five partner organizations. Mr. Sams’s experience working in this capacity provides him with first-hand knowledge of the important role federal historic preservation policy plays in safeguarding our nation’s complex history and heritage.

We strongly urge the Energy and Natural Resource Committee’s support of the nomination of Charles F. Sams III to the position of Director of the National Park Service.

Sincerely,

Paul W. Edmondson