



DATE: _____

Representative Raul M. Grijalva
Chairman
Natural Resources Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Senator Lisa Murkowski
Chairman
Energy and Natural Resources Committee
U.S. Senate
304 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Companion Bills HR3824 and S2340 to Establish Cahokia Mounds Mississippian Culture National Historical Park

Dear Chairmen Grijalva and Murkowski:

I, _____, by signing this letter of support, am joining U.S. Representatives Bost, Clay, Shimkus and Davis, Senator Durbin, Governor Pritzker of Illinois and many other valuable stakeholders in **support of establishing the Cahokia Mounds Mississippian Culture National Historical Park as a non-contiguous, collaborative partnership park between the State of Illinois, the National Park Service (NPS), and others. This effort elevates Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site (SHS) and the other significant satellite Mississippian mound groups in public ownership to a formal unit of the NPS system. This site has been found to meet all the criteria set for by the National Park Service as suitable, nationally significant and feasible to be and should be designated as such.**

As the earliest and largest pre-Columbian archaeological site north of Mexico and the pre-eminent example of a cultural and economic center of the pre-historic Mississippian cultural tradition, Cahokia Mounds is the exceptional example of pre-urban/urban structuring. Its political and economic hierarchy are responsible for the organization of labor, agriculture, and trade for the Mississippian Culture – reaching trade routes from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico, from beyond the Ozarks to the Ohio Valley. No other mounds within the National Park Service represent the Mississippian Culture as holistically and uniquely as its epicenter - Cahokia Mounds.

With assistance and guidance from the local communities, Indian Nations, federal agencies, Illinois and Missouri state agencies and local units of government, Heartlands Conservancy developed a thorough, compelling, and rigorous study that meets National Park Service standards and criteria. Results from the study, 13 public meetings, inclusive community outreach, and over 2,000 letters of support and surveys overwhelmingly support this effort to create a collaborative partnership with NPS; to enhance connectivity and link the cultural sites within the region; and to seek an elevated national designation that recognizes this cultural asset as a prominent national treasure, to be protected, enhanced and interpreted for all.

Cahokia Mounds combined with the surrounding satellite mound centers are America's first cities - emerging as the most significant and unsurpassed example of its time period. At its center, Monks Mound rises 100' over the Mississippi River landscape. Its current world-class interpretive center can embrace Cahokia Mounds Mississippian Culture National Historical Park revealing a part of our story to honor the past and share these resources with the current and future generations of this land.

Thank you for considering elevating and preserving Cahokia Mounds SHS and the Mississippian Culture in the coming months.

Sincerely,

Signature _____

Print name _____

email _____

Address _____

State _____

Zip _____