

Statement of
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Before the
House Committee on Resources
H.R. 2742, Construction of Native American Cultural
Center and Museum, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
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Good morning, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to present the views of the Administration on H.R. 2742, a bill to authorize funding for the construction of a Native American Cultural Center and Museum in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, a museum designated to display the heritage and culture of Indian tribes.

As an Oklahoman, I can honestly say that this is a project that I have enthusiastically supported for several years. I believe this is an excellent example of what can be accomplished when the State, Tribal and local governments work together on a project to work toward the economic and educational benefit of all parties concerned. I believe, as do others, that this is a project worthy of support. The Cultural Center and Museum will serve as a place of learning and as a home for collections that showcase many features of the history of America's past to showcase the significant contributions that American Indians have provided to this nation.

The Administration appreciates the interest of the Native American Cultural and Educational Authority (NACEA) seeking to construct such a cultural center and museum devoted to providing a state-of-the-art facility and providing the highest level of care to the objects contained in its collection. However, the Administration believes the use of limited Department appropriations to fund grant programs for the design, construction, and operation of projects of this type at non-Federal locations is inappropriate. This is especially true now that Federal budgetary resources are being redirected to America's war on terrorism and to protect Americans at home. Furthermore, any funds appropriated for this Cultural Center and Museum would not be available to reduce the Department's long list of deferred maintenance and construction projects for repairing Indian schools and preserving heritage and stewardship assets. Given the Department's large backlog of facility rehabilitation and replacement projects, we have established clear priorities for our limited resources. These priority needs cannot be addressed if large portions of our construction funds are diverted to non-Federal facilities.

H.R. 2742 authorizes the Secretary of the Interior, subject to the availability of appropriations, to award a grant to the NACEA, an agency of the State of Oklahoma to pay for a Federal share of the cost of the final design, construction, furnishing and equipping of the Native American Cultural Center and Museum that will be located directly at the southeast corner of I-35 and I-40 in Oklahoma City, and will encompass 298 acres. The Federal share of the cost for this project is 34 percent and a total of \$33 million is authorized to

be appropriated for use as grants, with the condition that the NACEA, or Oklahoma State or local government agencies, provide commitments of at least 66 percent of the cost of the activities.

The Administration urges the Native American Cultural Center and Museum to apply for existing Federal museum preservation and collection management programs since it is an agency of the State of Oklahoma. The following list of programs provide a variety of Federal funding:

- **National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)**

Challenge Grants: Challenge grants help institutions and organizations secure long-term support for, and improvements in, their humanities programs and resources. In special circumstances challenge grants can also help with limited direct costs, such as the purchase of capital equipment, construction and renovation, and even debt retirement. Because of the matching requirements, these NEH awards also strengthen the humanities by encouraging non-Federal sources of support.

Preservation Assistance Grants: These grants can help museums enhance their capacity to preserve their humanities collections. Applicants may request support for general preservation assessments or consultations with preservation professionals to develop a specific plan for addressing an identified problem. Awards will also be made to purchase basic preservation supplies, equipment, and storage furniture.

- **Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS)**

General Operating Support: The IMLS General Operating Support program encourages the best in museum service. Museums use these funds to strengthen collections care and raise funds from other sources. The two-year award provides unrestricted funds for ongoing institutional activities.

Conservation Project Support: Grants are available for five broad types of conservation activities, including collections treatment and environmental improvements.

- **National Science Foundation:** The Biological Research Collections (BRC) program provides support for collection improvement, for collection computerization, and for research to develop better techniques of curation and collection management. Physical improvements typically involve rehousing a collection, replacing inadequate equipment, providing new tools for continued growth, or incorporating one or more collections donated by another institution or individual. Allowable costs generally include the purchase and installation of new storage systems, the purchase of curatorial materials, as well as new curatorial and technical assistance specifically designed to effect the proposed improvements for the duration of the proposed project.

- **National Park Service**

Save America's Treasures: Grants are available for preservation and/or conservation work on nationally significant intellectual and cultural artifacts and nationally significant historic structures and sites. Intellectual and cultural artifacts include artifacts, collections, documents, monuments and works of art. Historic structures and sites include historic districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects. Grants are awarded through a competitive process. Each grant requires a dollar-for-dollar non-Federal match.

Once again, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to testify on what I believe is an important

recognition of American Indians within the State of Oklahoma. I am advised that the Department can provide any technical assistance, in coordination with the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, to determine ways to protect these cultural resources once they are acquired. I am pleased to answer any questions you may have.

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