



April 4, 2025

U.S. House of Representatives  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies  
The Honorable Mike Simpson, Chair  
The Honorable Chellie Pingree, Ranking Member

FY 2026 Written Testimony for the Hearing Record

Dear Chair Simpson and Ranking Member Pingree:

The American Institute of Architects (AIA) represents over 100,000 architects and design professionals. For nearly 170 years, AIA has been committed to safeguarding and improving the public's health, safety, welfare, and quality of life through the built environment.

Central to that mission has been AIA member commitment, as stewards of historic built design resources, to identifying, understanding, preserving, and adapting existing buildings. Additionally, AIA members are dedicated to advancing sustainability and climate resilience through innovation in building design, including the promotion of energy-efficient practices and the integration of low-embodied carbon materials.

AIA supports initiatives such as the Energy Star and EPA labeling programs, which encourage the reduction of carbon footprints and the creation of environmentally responsible buildings, reinforcing the profession's responsibility to future generations. As such, AIA respectfully submits the following recommendations for appropriations in the FY 2026 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies for your consideration.

**\$100 million amount for EPA Label Program for Low Embodied Carbon Construction**

The EPA Label Program for Low Embodied Carbon Construction was backed by substantial funding from the Inflation Reduction Act and aims to decarbonize the building industry by promoting products with lower embodied carbon emissions. Despite proposed funding cuts, this initiative is essential for driving decarbonization efforts and fostering sustainability within the construction sector. The program promotes the use of products with reduced carbon emissions, which directly supports national goals to combat climate change and transition toward a low-carbon economy. As municipalities, state governments, and corporations increasingly adopt "buy clean" policies, the EPA's label program will provide manufacturers with a consistent and credible way to report and reduce embodied carbon emissions across diverse markets. This reduces confusion and costs associated with regional requirements. Through a

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phased approach—improving data quality, establishing thresholds, and labeling products—the program ensures the construction industry can meet environmental standards and benefit from efficiencies, reduced operating costs, and access to new markets. The funding is vital for advancing the program’s critical phases, which standardize practices, enhance data accuracy, and incentivize manufacturers to prioritize sustainability. Cutting funding will undermine these efforts and hinder progress toward a more sustainable building industry.

### **80 million for the ENERGY STAR program**

The ENERGY STAR program has proven to be one of the most effective and efficient public-private partnerships in the federal government, delivering significant energy savings, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and driving economic growth. For example, for every dollar invested, there is a \$350 return in energy cost savings. However, its capacity to meet growing demand has been constrained by a steady reduction in funding.

Increasing the program's budget will enable ENERGY STAR to enhance its efforts across residential, commercial, and industrial sectors, expand its product categories, and provide critical resources to states, local governments, and communities. This investment will accelerate the transition to energy-efficient buildings, strengthen partnerships with utilities, and ensure that every American household benefits from the program’s environmental and economic advantages.

### **\$47 million for EPA’s efforts to reduce risk from indoor air**

Architects care deeply about indoor air quality because it directly impacts the health, comfort, and productivity of the spaces they design. As outdoor air quality continues to decline in many regions across the country, it is critical that we prioritize indoor air quality, as it directly impacts public health, productivity, and overall well-being. Despite growing awareness of the issue, insufficient resources have been allocated to address the risks posed by inadequate ventilation, toxins, and pollutants within buildings. These funds will support the development of innovative strategies, research, and policy measures that will ultimately enhance the quality of life for millions of Americans by improving the air they breathe indoors. We urge the committee to make this investment a priority, as it is essential to safeguarding the health and safety of our communities.

### **225 Million for the Historic Preservation Fund**

The Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) is under the National Park Service appropriation. HPF is the principal source of funding for the nation’s historic preservation programs, crucial to recognizing, saving, revitalizing, and protecting America's historic resources. Since its inception in 1976, HPF funding has supported State and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs/THPOs) in their essential work to administer federal preservation programs, ensuring timely reviews of federal projects as mandated by the National Historic Preservation Act. In FY

2022, SHPOs reviewed and consulted on over 177,000 federal undertakings and surveyed more than 5.3 million acres for cultural resources. Additionally, HPF's competitive grant programs fund critical preservation work across the country, fostering economic development and preserving significant historic sites. For example, the Idaho Heritage Trust used HPF funds to restore nine historic theaters, and the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry received support for the rehabilitation of the Colburn House, a key site in America's Revolutionary history.

The demands placed on SHPOs and THPOs have increased significantly with the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, and cuts to HPF grants would undermine preservation efforts and the economic development these programs drive. The American Association of Architects strongly urges increased investment in the Historic Preservation Fund to ensure that vital preservation work continues to thrive.

AIA urges your support for the recommended appropriation. Investing in the design, construction, and maintenance of secure, functional, and sustainable buildings is crucial for advancing U.S. foreign policy and protecting American interests abroad. If you require more information, please reach out to Michele Mihelic at [Michele.Mihelic@aia.org](mailto:Michele.Mihelic@aia.org) or Brittany Meyer at [Brittany.Meyer@aia.org](mailto:Brittany.Meyer@aia.org).

Thank you for your consideration.