Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515–3304

March 19, 2010

The Honorable James P. Moran
Chairman
House Appropriations Subcommittee
Interior, Environment & Related Agencies
B-308 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Michael K. Simpson
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee
Interior, Environment & Related Agencies
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Moran and Ranking Member Simpson:

We are writing to urge the Subcommittee to provide $232.5 million to the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2011, with $144 million for NEH National Programs and $60 million for the NEH Federal/State Partnership. This $65 million increase over the FY 2010 enacted level would help offset mounting economic pressures on the academic workforce and humanities institutions, as well as strengthen the nation’s infrastructure for humanities education and research for the long-run.

Even with the relatively small amount of funding provided to the endowment, NEH remains one of the largest and most important sources of support for sponsored research and other humanities activities in the U.S. Each year, NEH grants support strengthened institutional capacity, jobs, and professional development for thousands of scholars, educators, curators, librarians, public historians, museum professionals, filmmakers and others around the country. Their work is at the heart of efforts to preserve our nation’s heritage, strengthen our civic institutions, bring humanities to our communities, and educate the next generation of Americans to address complex challenges in a globally competitive workforce.

Current demand for humanities project support far exceeds funding availability. Each year, as billions of dollars are rightfully invested in research and education in science and technology, the relative federal investment in the humanities falls further behind. In FY 2009, NEH awarded only 16.9% of all competitive project proposals (it received more than 4,000 projects for more than $400 million), as compared to the 32% funding rate for merit-reviewed projects at the National Science Foundation. The requested increase would help close this gap by providing $44.4 million in new funding for NEH National Programs, with $36.9 million to increase the award rate for peer-reviewed project proposals to 25%, and $7.5 million to support a new, competitively-awarded graduate-student faculty program.

State humanities councils work in partnership with the NEH to reach millions of Americans each year through teacher institutes, literacy initiatives, programs on local history and culture, and support for local cultural and educational groups, community groups, and scholars. A recent survey found that the councils would need an additional $150 million to meet the need for programs and infrastructure support in their states. This request would provide councils with $19.6 million for operating grants to expand their reach and address unmet needs.
Finally, increased funding would ensure full implementation of agency plans to enhance Americans’ understanding of world cultures at home and abroad through *Bridging Cultures*, and to collect, analyze, and disseminate statistical information on the state of humanities through *Humanities Indicators*.

NEH did not receive any funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, and unfortunately, the President’s FY 2011 budget request of $161.3 million represents a $7.2 million (5.6%) cut to NEH program funds. We are aware of the many difficult choices your Subcommittee faces in crafting its FY 2011 bill, but we believe that strong federal support for the humanities is needed now more than ever to preserve America’s place as a world leader in education and innovation for all fields of learning. As the legislation that established the NEH forty years ago states, “An advanced civilization must not limit its efforts to science and technology alone, but must give full value and support to the other great branches of scholarly and cultural activity in order to achieve a better understanding of the past, a better analysis of the present, and a better view of the future.”

We appreciate your past support of NEH and urge you to provide a robust increase in FY 2011 funding for the endowment to advance the nation’s study and understanding of history, literature, foreign language, and other critical fields.

Sincerely,

David Price  
Member of Congress  
Co-Chair, Humanities Caucus

Thomas E. Petri  
Member of Congress  
Co-Chair, Humanities Caucus

Dale E. Kildee  
Member of Congress

Edward J. Markey  
Member of Congress

Peter A. DeFazio  
Member of Congress

Danny K. Davis  
Member of Congress

Vernon J. Ehlers  
Member of Congress

Henry A. Waxman  
Member of Congress
Vic Snyder
Member of Congress

Howard L. Berman
Member of Congress

Barney Frank
Member of Congress

Lynn C. Woolsey
Member of Congress

Robert E. Andrews
Member of Congress

Luis V. Gutiérrez
Member of Congress

Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress

Nick J. Rahall, II
Member of Congress

John D. Dingell
Member of Congress

Lucille Roybal-Allard
Member of Congress

Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress

Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress

David Wu
Member of Congress

Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress

James L. Oberstar
Member of Congress

Bill Owens
Member of Congress
Leonard Lance  
Member of Congress

Anna G. Eshoo  
Member of Congress

Jackie Speier  
Member of Congress

Dan Boren  
Member of Congress

Doris O. Matsui  
Member of Congress

Frank Pallone, Jr.  
Member of Congress

Jim Gerlach  
Member of Congress

Dina Titus  
Member of Congress

Lloyd Doggett  
Member of Congress

Robert A. Brady  
Member of Congress

Joe Courtney  
Member of Congress

Stephen F. Lynch  
Member of Congress

David Scott  
Member of Congress

Fortney Pete Stark  
Member of Congress

Donna F. Edwards  
Member of Congress

Gerald E. Connolly  
Member of Congress