

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 30, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden Jr.  
President  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden:

We write to encourage you to use your authority under the Antiquities Act to designate the Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site as a unit of the National Park System. We support elevating, protecting, and sharing this important archeological and cultural resource that represents the people and landscapes that once made up one of America's first cities in the Western Hemisphere.

Cahokia Mounds was the central hub and largest city built by the Indigenous Americans of the Mississippian Culture that ruled and traded over half of North America, more than 1.25 million square miles. This area was the first known organized urban area and government north of Mexico; and at its peak, it was larger than most European cities, including London. Cahokia boasted advanced mass production agriculture and commerce, relying on the local river system as a continental trade route. Some of the mounds built from AD 900-1400 still stand as earthen monuments and remnants of Mississippian Culture.

Cahokia Mounds has been recognized as a National Historic Landmark, an Illinois State Historic Site, and a World Heritage Site by the United Nations (UNESCO).

Cahokia at one time had over 120 mounds, but many have been lost to development. The current National Historic Landmark designation affords some limited protection around Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site. However, many other mound sites are threatened as new roads are built and development further encroaches on the remaining cultural resources of the region.

In 2016, the National Park Service completed a Reconnaissance Survey to determine if the area meets the criteria to be included as a unit of the National Park System. The survey concluded the site demonstrates national significance, suitability, feasibility, and has a need for National Park Service management.

Given the importance of this area and the support of the National Park Service, we support using your authority under the Antiquities Act to declare the Cahokia Mounds as a unit of the National Park System.

Sincerely,



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Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator



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Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator