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John E. Frohnmayer

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June 19, 1990

The Honorable Peter H. Kostmayer
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Kostmayer:

The Arts Endowment thoroughly supports your new legislation, the Great American Landscapes Act of 1990. It responds to intense public interest in historic and rural landscapes, and it correlates with the directions recently taken by our Design Arts Program, the section that would implement your Act.

Through Design Arts, we would establish a new Design Advancement grant category -- Landscape Design and Assessment. We would write grant guidelines, using staff members who understand landscape design, rural planning, and historic preservation. We would also establish a grants panel made up of landscape architects, professional planners, historic preservation specialists, at least one member of a state or local arts agency's design section, and representatives from leading schools of architecture and planning.

Possible recipients include landscape architecture schools, state arts agencies with design programs, state historic preservation agencies, chapters of professional design organizations, the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Alliance for Historic Landscape Preservation, as well as a variety of state and local agencies. Notification of the category would be made widely available via professional, state, and local networks.

The incentive to think about long-term landscape solutions is one of the best features of your Act. Since the users and beneficiaries of America's countryside often live elsewhere, sharing the responsibility and cost seems appropriate. Moreover, there is no ready source of local design assistance in rural areas where significant landscapes are threatened.

LINDA A. TIMAR
LEGISLATIVE ASSISTANT
No other federal agency has such a program and most with traditional land use roles deal either with federal land or perform a regulatory role. The Arts Endowment is the only agency charged with promoting aesthetic design quality; it has a proven process for awarding grants of this nature.

Sincerely yours,

John E. Frohnmayer
Chairman

JEF/Im