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U.S. Legislators Introduce Bill to Extend Authorization of Wheeling Heritage

WHEELING, W.Va. – April 28, 2021 – Wheeling Heritage was recently named in bipartisan federal legislation that would help keep the organization in operation. The proposed legislation, introduced in both the House and Senate, would extend its authorization as a National Heritage Area for the next 15 years. Currently, the organization is set to sunset at the end of September 2021.

Sens. Joe Manchin and Shelley Moore Capito introduced the legislation in the Senate, and Reps. McKinley and Miller introduced a companion bill in the House. Both pieces of legislation also include the reauthorization of the National Coal Heritage Area, which encompasses 13 counties in the heart of the Appalachian Mountains.

An extension of the official designation as a National Heritage Area ensures Wheeling Heritage will remain eligible for grants, funding and technical assistance from the National Park Service.

“This designation has brought additional federal funding to the region since 2001, when Wheeling was officially named a National Heritage Area,” said Alex Weld, executive director of Wheeling Heritage “This bipartisan support from our legislators shows they see the value in both preserving our history and supporting redevelopment. We’re hopeful that this bill will make its way through the legislative process, ensuring our work continues to support our region.”

According to a 2017 economic impact study, over a three-year period, Wheeling Heritage generated \$86.6 million in economic impact in the area, with support for 1,109 jobs and \$6.4 million in tax revenue.

Projects of Wheeling Heritage include the creation of the Artisan Center, the development of Heritage Port and the Intermodal Transportation Center, and the designation of 11 historic districts throughout the city of Wheeling. The organization works with various partners to spur entrepreneurship, encourage historic redevelopment, and tell Wheeling’s story through interpretive signage as well as its online publication Weelunk.

Wheeling Heritage is one of 55 National Heritage Areas across the country. These areas are designated by Congress as places where natural, cultural, and historic resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally important landscape.

About Wheeling Heritage

[Wheeling Heritage](#) is a catalyst for the revitalization of Wheeling. Through historic preservation, community development, and the arts, we help to tell Wheeling’s story and shape its future. We seek to improve the quality of life in Wheeling by preserving and investing in our city, collaborating with others, and engaging the citizens of Wheeling in our work.