



April 19, 2018

The Honorable Doug Ducey
Governor
1700 W Washington Street
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Dear Governor Ducey:

The Society for American Archaeology writes to express its strong opposition to House Bill 2498. This legislation, which is pending on your desk, has the potential to do enormous damage to Arizona's irreplaceable cultural heritage. It should be vetoed.

SAA is an international organization that, since its founding in 1934, has been dedicated to the research about and interpretation and protection of the archaeological heritage of the Americas. With more than 7,000 members, SAA represents professional archaeologists in colleges and universities, museums, government agencies, and the private sector. SAA has hundreds of members in Arizona, all 49 other U.S. states, and many nations around the world.

As we informed your colleagues in the Arizona legislature during its consideration of the measure, HB 2498 is an unnecessary attempt at a solution to address the concerns of some that historic preservation reviews unduly burden development projects. It would accomplish this by allowing non-professionals with potentially inadequate training to conduct archaeological investigations on Arizona state lands. Specifically, the bill would place the investigation and protection of Arizona's heritage in the hands of persons who have undertaken very limited amounts of training.

The proper care of archaeological materials requires comprehensive education and training. What would happen, for instance, if during a project review significant heritage resources were discovered and exposed? The individuals described in the legislation would not have the skills needed to preserve, document, and interpret the site. Damage and controversy would inevitably follow, resulting in delays and increased costs—the exact opposite of what the proponents of the measure intend.

Professional archaeologists have, by contrast, a bachelor's degree, and are mentored and supervised by managers who have earned advanced degrees and who also have extensive field and lab experience. This level of education is necessary in order to preserve and protect our heritage assets. These resources are unique. Once they are damaged or destroyed, either unintentionally or from careless handling by amateurs, a priceless link to our past is lost forever, along with the information it contains. Preserving the stories of our shared past—including the

objects and places of religious and cultural significance to Tribes and other traditional communities—requires expertise.

In addition, contrary to the opinions of the bill's supporters, the facts show that historic preservation reviews do not result in significant project delays. For example, during FY2016, only 12 out of 1,100 projects in Arizona, or 1%, required a formal memorandum of agreement under federal law for the protection of historic and cultural resources impacted by development activities. What's more, any bottlenecks in project development can be resolved under existing law and regulation, particularly through programmatic agreements and other streamlining procedures.

In conclusion, we strongly request that you veto HB 2498. It is a bad bill that would accomplish the opposite of its intended purpose and would potentially result in the needless and irreparable destruction of Arizona's finite cultural heritage.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan M. Chandler". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Susan M. Chandler, RPA
President