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WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Civil War Preservation Trust (CWPT) today applauded the U.S. House of Representatives for passing the Civil War Battlefield Preservation Act of 2002 (H.R. 5125). The authorization bill, which passed the House by unanimous consent on Tuesday evening, authorizes \$10 million a year to preserve endangered Civil War battlefields.

James Lighthizer, president of the CWPT

“This bill is a tremendous step

Unanimous U.S. House approval grants \$10M a year to endangered battlefields

program has helped protect nearly 8,000 acres of historic battlefield land in 12 states, including key parcels at Antietam in Maryland; Champion Hill in Mississippi; Malvern Hill and Manassas in Virginia; and Harpers Ferry, West Virginia.

The bill was introduced by California Congressman Gary G. Miller (R) and cosponsored by a bipartisan group of nine House members. In his remarks from the House floor, Miller noted the educational benefits of protecting battlefield land, stating: “I believe by preserving history we teach future generations not only where we are from, but also what we are about, and where we are heading. These battlefields are living classrooms to remind future generations of our national history.”

The Civil War Battlefield Preservation Act formally establishes a program that targets priority Civil War battlefields outside National Park Service (NPS)

boundaries. Grants from the program are competitively awarded by the American Battlefield Protection Program (an arm of NPS). By requiring matching funds, the program gets both the public and private sector actively involved in saving battlefield land. A similar bill (S. 2968) introduced by Sens. Paul Sarbanes (D-Md.), James Jeffords (1-Vt.) and Jeff Sessions (R-Ala.) is currently pending in the Senate.

With 42,000 members, CWPT is the largest nonprofit battlefield preservation organization in the United States. Its mission is to preserve our nation’s endangered Civil War battlefields and to promote appreciation of these hallowed grounds.

Preservation act passed

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CWPT Urges Support Of 2 Bills Before Congress

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The nonprofit Civil War Preservation Trust is urging its members to support congressional reauthorization of the Transportation Equity Act (TEA-3) and legislation that Trust President Jim Lighthizer said could garner \$100 million for battlefield preservation.

H.R. 5125, introduced in the House of Representatives July 15, would authorize establishment of a battlefield acquisition grant program. The bill calls for an annual appropriation of \$10 million from the federal Land & Water Conservation Fund to preserve battlefields, starting in 2004 and continuing through 2008. Lighthizer noted that the grant would be matched one-for-one, resulting in \$100 million in battlefield preservation funds.

Last year the Trust helped to secure \$11 million in federal grant money for a three-year period, to expire next year. The program follows a similar three-year program in 1998 that provided \$8 million for battlefield preservation.

Lighthizer launched a petition drive to enlist "citizen co-sponsors" of the bill, which was introduced by California Congressman Gary Miller.

According to Trust spokesman Jim Campi, the Transportation Equity Act program (which was included in the two previous Transportation authorization bills, IS-TEA in 1991 and TEA-21 in 1998) "has been one of the most effective weapons in the Civil War preservation arsenal." It will be coming up for consideration in the next 12 months.

The CWPT urges continuation of the program and its use for historically and culturally important projects such as battlefield preservation. Sites benefited by these funds include Fort Morgan, Alabama; Prairie Grove, Arkansas; Allatoona, Georgia; Antietam, Monocacy and South Mountain in Maryland; Mill Springs, Munfordville and Perryville in Kentucky; Corinth, Mississippi; Honey Springs, Oklahoma; Kernstown, Malvern Hill and Sailor's Creek in Virginia; and Rich Mountain, West Virginia.

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Senate OK Expected Of Funds For Battlefield Preservation

By Deborah Fitts

WASHINGTON, D.C. — A bill that would authorize \$10 million a year for battlefield preservation was approved in the House of Representatives Oct. 1 by unanimous consent. Senate approval was expected to follow.

The Civil War Battlefield Preservation Act, introduced in July, was pushed by the Civil War Preservation Trust. It would authorize Congress to appropriate as much as \$10 million annually for five years.

The money would be available as 50-50 matching grants to buy battlefield land or easements. The applicants will typically be nonprofits, like the Trust, which will partner with local governments in seeking the money.

"This bill is a tremendous step forward for battlefield preservation," said Trust President James Lighthizer. "It will allow nonprofit groups to save thousands of acres of battlefield land that would have otherwise succumbed to the bulldozer's blade."

The bill also calls for an update

of a 1993 congressional report by the Civil War Sites Advisory Commission, which identified the 384 most significant battles. Staffers from the American Battlefield Protection Program will insert new information about land preservation or losses in the past decade.

Trust spokesman Jim Campi said the bill will, for the first time, formalize the process of federal battlefield funding. In fiscal years 1999 and 2002 Congress appropriated \$8 million and \$11 million, respectively, for battlefields, but the money was "earmarked" through temporary coalitions of legislators.

The new bill "codifies the structure of the program," Campi explained. "It makes it a reliable part of the federal budget."

Since its creation, the program has helped protect 8000 battlefield acres in 12 states, including key parcels at Antietam, Md.; Champion Hill, Miss.; Malvern Hill and Manassas, Va.; and Harpers Ferry, W. Va.

Campi said the new funding would kick in once the \$11 million from this year is obligated.