



SOCIETY FOR AMERICAN ARCHAEOLOGY

Testimony of the Society for American Archaeology

House Committee on Natural Resources Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands

Concerning H.R. 5110, the Casa Grande Ruins National Monument Boundary Modification Act of 2010

June 10, 2010

The Society of American Archaeology (SAA) strongly supports H.R. 5110, the Casa Grande Ruins National Monument Boundary Modification Act of 2010. This important legislation would provide for the greater protection of one of the most important archaeological areas in North America, to the benefit of present and future generations of Americans.

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 members in all 50 states as well as many other nations around the world.

The Casa Grande National Monument, first protected in 1889, and declared an archaeological preserve in 1892, was designated a Monument in 1918. It is the oldest archaeological unit of the National Park Service. It is also the only one that preserves and interprets the physical evidence of the ancient Hohokam people, who dominated the central and southern portions of what is now the state of Arizona for many centuries, and are the ancestors of the modern Tohono O'odham nation. As valuable as the existing Monument is, however, there are many unprotected archaeological sites located just beyond its boundaries. The rapid development that the area has witnessed in recent decades is threatening many of these sites. A great portion of the Hohokam culture's archaeological heritage is at risk, potentially undermining the effectiveness of the Monument in preserving its priceless cultural resources.

H.R. 5110 would help remedy this problem by authorizing the transfer to NPS of certain parcels of land from other federal agencies, to be managed as part of the Monument. It would also allow NPS to acquire for the Monument, by donation or purchase from willing sellers, other nearby properties containing Hohokam archaeological resources. Finally, the bill would authorize NPS to perform studies to identify additional areas that would be appropriate for future inclusion in the Monument.

Expansion of the Monument would greatly add to its value as an interpretive center of Hohokam culture, bring more heritage tourism into local communities, and better protect these irreplaceable sites so that future generations of Americans may learn more about the history of the continent and those who came before them.

SAA urges the Committee to approve H.R. 5110 as soon as possible. Thank you for your time and consideration.