



GOBIERNO DE PUERTO RICO

Instituto de Cultura Puertorriqueña

April 13, 2021

The Honorable Raul Grijalva
Chairman
House Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Bruce Westerman
Ranking Member
House Committee on Natural Resources
1329 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Joe Neguse
Chairman
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests,
and Public Lands
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Russ Fulcher
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests,
and Public Lands
1329 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Fort San Gerónimo del Boquerón Affiliation to National Park System

Dear Chairman Grijalva, Ranking Member Westerman, Chairman Neguse, and Ranking Member Fulcher:

I write in support of H.R. 2444, the *Fort San Gerónimo Preservation Act*, legislation introduced by Puerto Rico's Congresswoman, Honorable Jennifer González-Colón, to establish Fort San Gerónimo del Boquerón in Puerto Rico as an affiliated area of the National Park System, and for other purposes. The Fort forms part of the built heritage of the United States. It played a crucial role in historical events. It is comprised of the fort and grounds listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Fort San Gerónimo del Boquerón, built in 1791 is the most endangered property within the military heritage in San Juan, Puerto Rico. The Fort was built to defend the San Juan Islet from invasion of enemy troops from the east side shore. It was part of the First Line of Defense of the San Juan Islet and at one point in history, it became the most important defensive fort against military attacks from the English navy.

The Fort was built directly over the seabed and connected to the shore by a brick and stone masonry bridge. The placement of the iconic building is at the mouth of the Condado Lagoon and the Atlantic Ocean, making the fort very vulnerable to strong winds and ocean waves. This implies that the preservation and conservation that the structure requires is on-going.

CRRC

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The Institute of Puerto Rican Culture, being the management entity by law decree of Fort San Gerónimo del Boquerón, fully supports the bill presented by Puerto Rico's Congresswoman, Honorable Jennifer González Colón, and commends her for the initiative. We look forward to the affiliation to the National Park System to further strengthen the preservation of this crucial piece of history.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "CR", is positioned above the printed name.

Carlos Ruiz
Executive Director

