



FACTS FOR FEDS

May 13, 2011

President Richard M. Nixon's Statement on Executive Order 11593

Several years ago the intervention of a President averted planned construction of two huge Federal office buildings fronting on Lafayette square opposite the White House. Instead, restoration and reconstruction of the historic 19th-century townhouses along Madison and Jackson Places was undertaken, with provision for the old residences themselves to accommodate government offices and for the large modern structures to be placed behind them. It was a significant example of the way intelligent planning can meet modern urban needs without sweeping away the gracious presence of the past.

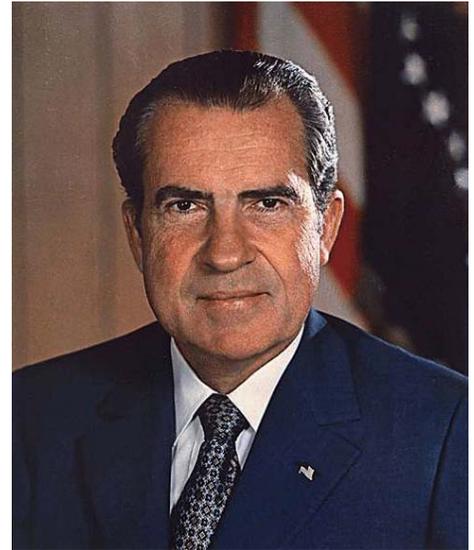
Unfortunately, the preservation of Lafayette Square's historic character was the exception, not the rule, in recent Federal treatment of properties with special historic and cultural value. America's awakening consciousness of environmental protection has brought new respect for the best works of man as well as for the realm of nature—and the number of properties nominated for listing on the National Register of Historic Places has increased dramatically in recent years. Yet the number of nominations of Federally owned properties has lagged, even though the Federal Government—particularly in its military installations—owns an important share of the Nation's historic sites and buildings.

One reason for this lag appears to be that State and local historic preservation officials have been reluctant to undertake surveys and evaluation on Federally

owned property. This has to change. It is time for a truce between the bulldozer of progress and the treasures of the American past.

In my Environmental Message last February, I announced that I would take action "to insure that no federally-owned property is demolished until its historic significance has first been reviewed." Today I am directing Federal agencies to begin evaluating their properties to determine which may possess historic, archaeological or architectural significance. This comprehensive evaluation of all currently owned Federal properties is to be completed by July 1, 1973. Until that time Federal agencies will exercise caution to assure that properties which might qualify for listing on the National Register of Historic Places are not inadvertently transferred, sold, demolished, or altered. In addition I am directing the Federal agencies to encourage and cooperate with State and local historic preservation officials in making surveys on Federally owned property.

Besides providing an example of leadership in preserving its own culturally significant sites, buildings and artifacts, the Federal Government must take steps to encourage preservation by other levels of government and by the private sector. In my legislative proposals this year I have recommended the establishment of Federal insurance guarantees for restoration of privately owned historic properties. I have also recommended, as part of the National



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Land Use Policy Act of 1971, that States control land uses in historic districts to assure that construction in such areas is consistent with preservation of historic characteristics. I am also proposing that tax laws be amended to encourage restoration of historic buildings.

As we approach the American Bicentennial, it is fitting that we devote greater attention to the protection and enhancement of our cultural heritage. By my order today I am directing Federal agencies to assure that the Government's own historic properties are identified, nominated for listing on the National Register, and preserved at professional standards. By action on my other proposals, the Congress can give new impetus to historical preservation throughout the United States.

President Richard M. Nixon

• May 13, 1971