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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3205

June 17, 2019

The Honorable David Bernhardt
Secretary of the Interior
United States Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Bernhardt,

I write in support of the nomination of Sag Harbor Hills, Azurest, and Ninevah Beach Subdivisions (SANS) Historic District in Suffolk County, New York to be placed on the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places. This designation will create awareness of the historical significance of these communities, as well as ensure the continued protection of these areas.

Founded following World War II, these communities have for generations offered a diverse community for all races to live and vacation, serving particularly as a summer retreat for middle-class African-American families. These communities were among the very few beach communities on the East Coast founded by African-Americans, and the SANS communities have continued to attract African-Americans and others from all backgrounds to spend summers. The area features historic properties developed by African Americans, including architect Amaza Lee Meredith, one of the first professional African-American women architects, who built at least two homes in Azurest, including one that she called her own, during the summer months.

The requested designation will protect the modest mid-century residences that have come to define the character and heritage of the SANS communities. Increasing property values throughout Sag Harbor and the East End of Long Island have led to increased development in the area. This new development threatens to undermine the historical character of the community, displace residents, and prevent the continued discovery of historically significant locations. As one of the very first professional African-American women architects, any remaining examples of Meredith's designs would be extremely significant. As unique communities that developed and thrived in an era of institutionalized racism, these areas should be recognized, celebrated, and protected.

I ask that you please give this application your full consideration. If you have any questions, or desire further information, please do not hesitate to contact my staff member, Dominic Sanchez, at (202) 224-4451.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kirsten Gillibrand". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator