

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Michael Regan
Administrator
United States Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20460

The Honorable Deb Haaland
Secretary
United States Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington DC 20240

Dear Administrator Regan and Secretary Haaland,

As the Representative for Louisiana's 2nd Congressional District, I write to you today on a pressing matter affecting my district and many others across the Deep South and the nation. I ask that you use your existing permitting authority to require industrial corporations or entities to certify that there are no burial grounds of the formerly enslaved upon the premises seeking a permit.

In my home state of Louisiana, the legislature created the Louisiana Slavery Ancestral Burial Grounds Preservation Commission in 2017. This Commission protects the interests of the descendants of ancestors buried over a century ago. The Commission studies and develops measures to preserve and protect unmarked and historic burial grounds, graves, and cemeteries of the formerly enslaved in Louisiana. This effort is not only significant to the formerly enslaved, it is important to all Americans. To truly embrace the American experience we must acknowledge our tragic past as part of our shared cultural identity.

Most burial grounds and cemeteries of the formerly enslaved are unmarked graves, leaving little information on who these people were, how they lived, their interpersonal connections, and most importantly: their link to their current descendants. The discovery of these burial grounds is critical to help families trace back their roots and preserve these sacred spaces for future generations.

People often take family lineage for granted. However, many Black Americans' do not have that luxury because some of our ancestors didn't come here by choice. They weren't able to document their lives and progress as their enslavers could. Chattel slavery attempted to erase our traditions and deny us our native cultural identity.

History should be regarded as a means for understanding the past and solving the challenges of the future. Our community deserves better, and our ancestors deserve peace.

That is why I ask that you use your existing authority to require industrial corporations or entities to certify that there are no burial grounds of the formerly enslaved upon the premises seeking a permit.

Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to hearing your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Troy A. Carter, Sr.", with a stylized, cursive script.

Troy A. Carter, Sr.
Member of Congress