



Senate Approves Bill to Restore Angel Island
Immigration Station
November 16, 2005

Washington, DC – The Senate today unanimously approved legislation that would preserve and restore the Angel Island Immigration Station in San Francisco Bay, Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) announced.

“The American story is one of immigrants coming to this land and building a better life for themselves, for their children and grandchildren,” Senator Feinstein said. **“In the west, that story often began at Angel Island. So just as we have preserved Ellis Island in the East, it is time for the federal government to make an equal commitment to our Western port of entry, Angel Island.”**

The Angel Island Immigration Station Restoration and Preservation Act was sponsored in the Senate by Senator Feinstein and by Rep. Lynn Woolsey (D-Petaluma) in the House. It authorizes \$15 million of federal funds for the Angel Island Immigration Station preservation project. With passage in the House in May and the Senate today, the legislation now goes to the President for signature.

Current estimates to restore the Angel Island Immigration Station total over \$30 million. To date, the Immigration Station has secured \$16 million from private foundations, federal and state government sources. But because the Immigration Station is located in a California State Park, this legislation is needed to authorize additional federal dollars beyond the grants for which it has already qualified.

The Angel Island Immigration Station was the entry point for over 1 million immigrants from 1910-1940. This includes approximately 175,000 Chinese immigrants who were detained at Angel Island before they were granted entry to San Francisco. According to the Angel Island Immigration Foundation, “the average detention was two to three weeks, but many stayed for several months and a few were forced to remain on the island for nearly two years.” During their detention, many of the Chinese immigrants carved poetry on the walls of the station. Today, about 140 of the poems remain on the walls of the detention barracks.

In 1997, the Angel Island Immigration Station was designated as a National Historic Landmark and in 2000, it was placed on “America’s 11 Most Endangered Historic Places” list, becoming an official project of Save America’s Treasures, a joint program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the White House Millennium Council.

Senators Barbara Boxer (D-CA), Daniel Akaka (D-HI), and Daniel Inouye (D-HI) are cosponsors of the legislation in the Senate. The House bill was cosponsored by Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-S.F.)

###