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Preservation Grants Committee
Society for Industrial Archeology
Department of Social Sciences
Michigan Technological University
1400 Townsend Drive
Houghton, MI 49931-1295

Re: ~~Friends of Taconic State Park, Copake Iron Furnace Grant~~

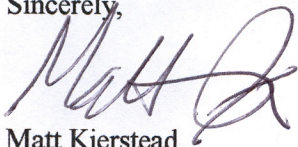
Dear Society for Industrial Archeology Preservation Grants Committee:

I would like to add my support to the Friends of Taconic State Park Industrial Heritage Preservation Grant application for the Copake iron furnace shelter project.

The shelter would finally provide a measure of protection for the remains of the iron furnace and allow for safe and enhanced viewing and interpretation of its unusual surviving water-cooled hearth. I have inspected all of the historic iron blast furnace sites in the CT/NY Salisbury Iron District and many others in the Northeast U.S. and Appalachians. The Copake blast furnace stack is unique in the Salisbury District, and possibly elsewhere, for its surviving water-cooled hearth. Most other hearths of this era are either hidden behind enclosing masonry or completely torn out. Remarkably, the Copake hearth survives in a condition that shows important aspects of its construction, including the integration of its structural supports into the surrounding stack, the arrangement of the firebrick lining against the bosh cooling plates, and elements of its water piping. Although much of the stack's outer stonework is missing, the Copake hearth provides an unusual and valuable look at water-cooled iron furnace hearth technology from the period of transition from natural to man-made refractory materials aided by water cooling, and from masonry hearths integrated into their surrounding stacks to more modern, freestanding hearths. I have not seen another intact hearth reflecting this technological transition elsewhere.

More broadly, the Copake furnace shelter would be an important tangible first step in long-term plans to preserve, enhance and interpret other surviving elements of the former Copake Iron Works at Copake Falls State Park for public education. Beyond the furnace stack, the park's other surviving historic industrial resources represent an unusual surviving cluster of period ironworks infrastructure unique in the Salisbury District for their extent and free public access. I encourage the Preservation Grants Committee to look favorably on the Friends of Taconic State Park Industrial Heritage Preservation Grant application.

Sincerely,



Matt Kierstead
SIA National, Roebling & New England Chapters

cc: Friends of Taconic State Park