Dear Patriotic Friend,

As a student of our nation’s history, you probably know that nearly 33 percent of the major battles of the American Civil War were fought in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

But you may not know that today, we are fighting—harder than we have ever had to fight before—a new series of relentless, multi-front battles throughout Virginia for the state’s remaining unprotected battlefield and.

From Petersburg to Richmond, from the Tidewater to the Shenandoah Valley, thousands of acres of hallowed ground are threatened by rampant, widespread, unrestrained, extremely well-funded development from utility-scale solar farms, data centers, warehouse distribution centers, residential and other commercial development.

That’s why I am writing to you today with a battle plan to fight back—our chance to save fully 20 acres of this hallowed ground at five different battlefields with anticipated matching funds that would multiply the value of any gift you make by a astounding $30-to-$1!

I apologize in advance for all the numbers, but I want you to have a full understanding of the opportunity we have before us today:

At Mine Run, we can save 702 acres; at Reams Station, where we are getting very close to substantially completing that battlefield, we can save another crucial 96 acres; at Boydton Plank Road, we can save the very first 12 acres ever saved at that battlefield; same thing at Dinwiddie Court House, where we can reserve the first 8 acres ever saved here; and finally, at the Breakthrough at Petersburg, where we have already saved 407 acres!

Add it all up … that’s fully 820 acres of threatened Virginia hallowed ground. This is remarkable because in all of 2022 — a very successful year — you and I saved 1,281 acres across America. If we can successfully close these five transactions, we will have already saved fully 64 percent of what we did last year!

Even better, we have various matching-grant sources, generous landowner donations (where a landowner heroically turned down an offer from a solar farm developer in favor of preservation!), I calculate that we can save 702 acres at $3.36 million in transaction value …

… for $111,856! That’s a $30-to-$1 match on your donationollar, certainly the largest match ratio we have seen this year, and one of the top-tier matches we’ve ever had.
If you could use $30,000 or just $1,000, you wouldn’t think twice, right? If you heard that your local grocery store was selling $15 worth of groceries for $5, I’m sure you’d like me — and already be in the car driving to the store!

Well, that’s the opportunity we have today. Only último e’re not buying eggs or chicken! We’re saving America’s history and heritage, and we’re doing it in place where it has never been more threatened.

Loudoun County, Virginia, is far from where I am writing this letter to you. The Home of the Battle of Balls Bluff, a hidden and often overlooked area that was called the “ing eton M. osby’s Confederacy.”

That day, the owners of this tract likely sold it. We are feeling the development pressure on the battlefields at Manassas, Bristow Station, and many others.

The well-funded big-tel companies and developers are pursuing landowners — including any how about to ee their land reserved with the uge, often resistible offers, making it difficult for us to compete.

I’ve said it before, and I’ll say it again here: The American Battlefield Trust is not anti-development. We know that people need places to live, work, raise families, shop, and enjoy the American Dream. However, we are absolutely opposed to development on hallowed ground. Developers can move their projects to other sites; we cannot move where America’s history happened, and once ground, hallowed by the blood of those who fought there, is paved over and built upon, it is gone forever, denied to all future generations.

Quickly, here is the situation at the ground at each of the five tracts we are working to save:

**THE 702 ACRES AT MINE RUN**

Less than two years ago, a company offered the owners of this property a whopping $6.8 million to put a huge solar farm here. I don’t know if you’ve seen one of these, but imagine hillsides and farmlands completely blanketed in large solar panels.

The company didn’t care that this tract was the site of a major setback for General Robert E. Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia. Fortunately, the owners of the land did know, and they did care. They turned down the offer to save farm land and preserve the land instead. (My friend, this is a rare form of unselfish heroism, and it is often resisted.)

Their landowner walked away from literally millions of dollars to preserve their land, and we are grateful for their commitment. Please join us in thanking them for their commitment to save the battlefield, its reservation, and its history.

**AN ADDITIONAL 96 ACRES AT REAMS STATION**

Eight Federal Army units from five states fought there, this tract during the battle of the Union. Impressive earthenworks from the battle remain on the land, which is adjacent to hundreds of acres you and your fellow Trust members have already preserved.
But there have been dangerous development pressures in recent years — including yet another solar farm — which have threatened the integrity of this battlefield. Thank goodness another responsible landowner wants to see this key parcel preserved, and has offered a significant donation, leaving us a much more manageable amount left to raise to secure this part of the battlefield forever. (Your gift can make it happen!)

★ THE FIRST 12 A CRES AT BOYDTON PLANK ROAD ★

Last year, a “FOR SALE” sign popped up on his property. Upon investigation, we discovered a plan to subdivide it into lots for new homes! We couldn’t let that happen, so we bought land, secured house lots, and stabilized the site, preserv- ing significant battle action. The intersection of the White Oak and Boydton Plank roads and the site of the Union’s successful attack on the Confederate army, including the capture of my great-great-grandfather, was an important point in the history of the Boydtown Plank Road battlefield.

While you and I have saved any important acres at nearby Huie Oak Road, this is our first time anywhere as ever to secure the Boydton Plank Road battlefield. This is our one chance to secure it and prevent it from being destroyed by new construction.

★ ALSO, THE FIRST 8 ACRES EVER SAVED AT DINWIDDIE COURTHOUSE ★

It is closing ours of the Civil War’s obscure site came the focus of intense fighting between 5,000 Federal officers under General Phil Sheridan and 0,000 Confederates under George Pickett. While technically Confederate victory, it set the stage for further fighting, and more than 10,000 Confederates were casualties (including a great-grandfather, who was captured here).

I know eight acres may not seem like much, but we are able to purchase this land at a very reasonable price (the developers start sniffing around), and he preservation of the Boydtown Plank Road battlefield is our chance to secure it.

★ FINALLY, ANOTHER 2 ACRES AT THE BREAKTHROUGH ★

Small in size, enormous in importance, this tract actually saw three battles — the first in the fall of 1864 at the Battle of Peebles’ Farm and twice in the Battles of Jones Farm and the Battle of the Breakthrough, which directly led to the fall of Petersburg.

These two acres are contiguous to preserved rust lands which are themselves adjacent to other lands managed by the National Park Service and the historical Park. They offer opportunities for us to not only reserve them, but also get the process of removing and erasing structures, including 1972 wells, and several outbuildings, restoring the land and the history of the soldiers who were there.

I had a recent conversation with a veteran at the Breakthrough, tromper whom e recently ust visited The Breakthrough as the first time ever, aying, “It to me a real place” to see the preservation and restoration work we have done on that hallowed ground. To day, we can save this land and create even more visitors, encountering his amazing story.
When you and I look out at hallowed ground like this, we see our nation’s history to be cherished and earned from. We close our eyes, and we hear the cries of young men called to duty, feel the ribcage-rattling boom of cannons, and smell the powder smoke in the air.

But when developers look at these very same lands, they see something entirely different. They see money... they see “unused” land on a tax map... they see raw, open land that is being “wasted.” They see people like us — and landowners who want to see their family property preserved — as dinosaurs, relics from a different age who are opposing their way of “progress.”

Well, I’m happy to be considered a relic, a thorn in the side of any developer who wants to destroy battlefield, and I’m guessing that you’re standing right there beside me.

If we can at the developers and lose these five transactions or Virginia battlefields totaling 20 acres a month, it will be a clear demonstration of those people’s not only our shared commitment, but of our will to keep fighting, no matter what, and our determination to win against all odds.

Please know how grateful I am to you, for all you have done, and for all you are doing to save our nation’s hallowed ground, at these five sites, as well as all across America. Future generations who will never know our names will still think well of us for the legacy of battlefield preservation we are leaving to them.

And if you ask me, inspiring current and future generations to appreciate our country, its history, and the sacrifices that were made by previous generations at these hallowed fields is one of the most important things we will ever do. I don’t need a data center to tell me that.

Thank you again, and please let me hear from you as soon as possible.

With warm personal regards,

David N. Duncan
President

P.S. Remember last year, the American Battlefields Trust protected 28 acres of cause of your generosity and commitment! The 820 acres in these transactions would be us to 4% of last year’s total acres saved. It’s only a pity! Please keep our march going forward with our most generous gift now to seize the opportunity for a $30-to-$1 match! And please write a short note of thanks to the landowners of the property at Mine Run, whose decision to save Civil War history allowed for instead of selling to a solar farm. Saying thank you is the right thing. I’ll forward our note of thanks along with yours to these wonderful, patriotic owners.

Let’s keep fighting! Please make your best gift now to secure a $30-to-$1 match!

Thank you!