

S. HRG. 119-238

PENDING LEGISLATION

HEARING BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS OF THE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

ON

S. 290	S. 1131	S. 2270
S. 332	S. 1135	S. 2308
S. 446	S. 1280	S. 2369
S. 573	S. 1353	S. 2385
S. 601	S. 1377	S. 2546
S. 730	S. 1518	S. 2708
S. 791	S. 1777	S. 2970
S. 858/H.R. 186	S. 1870	H.R. 249
S. 1088	S. 1926	

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The text for each of the bills addressed in this hearing can be found on the Committee's website at: <https://www.energy.senate.gov/hearings/2025/12/national-park-subcommittee-to-receive-testimony-on-pending-legislation>

PENDING LEGISLATION

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2025

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS,
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES,
Washington, DC.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:00 a.m. in Room SD-366, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Steve Daines, Chairman of the Subcommittee, presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. STEVE DAINES, U.S. SENATOR FROM MONTANA

Senator DAINES. The Subcommittee will come to order.

Today's Subcommittee hearing is the first in the 119th Congress. I want to thank my co-chair, Senator King, as I want to remind everybody here, we refer to each other as co-chairs because we want to view this as perhaps the most bipartisan committee in the U.S. Senate. And so, we don't have a chairman and ranking member, we have co-chairs, and the gavel has gone back and forth during our tenure here. And Angus, it's always great to partner with you.

I look forward to continuing our long streak of our bipartisan work. Specifically, I am excited to continue our work on reauthorizing the Legacy Restoration Fund to address Park Service deferred maintenance in our very strong, bipartisan America the Beautiful Act. The Legacy Restoration Fund has been a historic investment in our parks and our public lands. I look forward to working with Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich, as well as all of my colleagues, to get our America the Beautiful Act to President Trump's desk before the country's 250th birthday on July 4th.

On today's agenda, we have 26 bills, many of which are bipartisan or have the support from the state delegation. I am excited to hear more about Senate bill 290, the Making National Parks Safer Act, led by Senators Barrasso and King. One of the first hearings I led as Chairman of the Parks Subcommittee was on encouraging the next generation to visit the parks, where we talked about technology in the parks, including emergency communications and digital park passes. We have made progress since that hearing back in 2015. Senator King and I were successful in getting our bill signed into law last year to allow a digital America the Beautiful pass but we still have significant issues with the emergency communications. I look forward to hearing how this bill will help expand next-generation 9-1-1 and other emergency communication systems.

We will also hear from the Park Service on a number of bills led by my colleagues, including Senate bill 446, related to the Big Cypress National Preserve; Senate bill 573, designating a mountain in Alaska; Senate bill 601, related to a memorial in Kentucky; Senate bill 858, the National Medal of Honor Monument Location Act; Senate bill 1135, related to the Bonneville Shoreline Trail; Senate bill 1280, the Down East Remembrance Act; Senate bill 1353, to modify the Second Division Memorial in DC; Senate bill 1377, the Theodore Roosevelt National Park Wild Horses Protection Act; Senate bill 2270, the Myakka Wild and Scenic River Act; Senate bill 2308, the PATRIOT Parks Act; Senate bill 2385, the Restoring Truth and Sanity—it sounds like something we need there, Mr. Co-Chairman—Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History Act; and Senate bill 2970, related to Capitol Reef National Park.

Finally, I want to mention one bill that's not on today's agenda, but has important Park Service equities. Senate bill 1858 requires national cemeteries, including those administered by the National Park Service, to be open to visitors during federal holidays—what a novel concept—so family and friends can visit their loved ones during special remembrance days. Senate bill 1858 was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs, but as it mandates cemeteries administered by the Park Service to remain open, and specifically, the Custer National Cemetery in Montana, I wanted to flag this important bill for the Park Service's review and their support.

A quick housekeeping item, without objection, today's complete agenda, as well as all written statements and letters that have been sent to the Subcommittee, will be included in the official record, without objection.

[The agenda for today's hearing follows. Letters and written statements appear where introduced by a committee member, or otherwise in the appendix of this hearing document.]

SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS

HEARING AGENDA FOR TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2025

The purpose of this hearing is to receive testimony on the following bills:

- **S. 290**, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to upgrade existing emergency communications centers in units of the National Park System to Next Generation 9-1-1 systems, and for other purposes (Barrasso);
- **S. 332**, to require a study on Holocaust education efforts of states, local educational agencies, and public elementary and secondary schools, and for other purposes (Rosen);
- **S. 446**, to prohibit Big Cypress National Preserve from being designated as wilderness or as a component of the National Wilderness Preservation System, and for other purposes (Scott);
- **S. 573**, to designate a mountain in the State of Alaska as Denali (Murkowski);
- **S. 601**, to remove restrictions from a parcel of land in Paducah, Kentucky (Paul);
- **S. 730**, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to assess the suitability and feasibility of establishing the African Burial Ground International Memorial Museum and Educational Center at the African Burial Ground National Monument, and for other purposes (Gillibrand);
- **S. 791**, to establish the Justice Thurgood Marshall National Historic Site in the State of Maryland as an affiliated area of the National Park System, and for other purposes (Van Hollen);
- **S. 858/H.R. 186**, to authorize the National Medal of Honor Museum Foundation to establish a commemorative work on the National Mall to honor the extraordinary acts of valor, selfless service, and sacrifice displayed by Medal of Honor recipients (Justice)/(Rep. Moore);
- **S. 1088**, to provide that the memorial to commemorate the sacrifice and service of the women who worked on the home front to support the efforts of the United States military during World War II may be located on the National Mall, and for other purposes (Shaheen);

- **S. 1131**, to establish the Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve in the State of Georgia, and for other purposes (Ossoff);
- **S. 1135**, to amend the National Trails System Act to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study on the feasibility of designating the Bonneville Shoreline Trail (Curtis);
- **S. 1280**, to designate six creeks in North Carolina in honor of the lives lost in a plane crash in Carteret County, North Carolina, on February 13, 2022, and for other purposes (Tillis);
- **S. 1353**, to extend the authority for modifications to the Second Division Memorial in the District of Columbia (Murkowski);
- **S. 1377**, to ensure the maintenance of a herd of horses in Theodore Roosevelt National Park, and for other purposes (Hoeven);
- **S. 1518**, to redesignate the Saratoga National Historical Park as the “Saratoga National Battlefield Park” (Gillibrand);
- **S. 1777**, to amend the California Desert Protection Act of 1994 to expand the boundary of Joshua Tree National Park, to redesignate the Cottonwood Visitor Center at Joshua Tree National Park as the “Dianne Feinstein Visitor Center,” and for other purposes (Padilla);
- **S. 1870**, to adjust the boundary of the Santa Monica National Recreation Area to include the Rim of the Valley Corridor, and for other purposes (Schiff);
- **S. 1926**, to encourage reduction of disposable plastic products in units of the National Park System, and for other purposes (Merkley);
- **S. 2270**, to amend the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to designate the portion of the Myakka River in Sarasota County, Florida, as a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, and for other purposes (Scott);
- **S. 2308**, to amend the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to collect a surcharge from international visitors to units of the National Park System, and for other purposes (Banks);
- **S. 2369**, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to remove or permanently conceal the name of Francis Newlands on the grounds of the memorial fountain located at Chevy Chase Circle in the District of Columbia, and for other purposes (Van Hollen);
- **S. 2385**, to codify Executive Order 14253 relating to restoring truth and sanity to American history, and for other purposes (Banks);
- **S. 2546**, to provide for an extension of the legislative authority of the National Emergency Medical Services Memorial Founda-

tion to establish a commemorative work in the District of Columbia and its environs (Coons);

- **S.2708**, to enhance the preservation, maintenance, and management of national historic trails and national scenic trails, and for other purposes (Kaine);
- **S.2970**, to authorize the use of off-highway vehicles in certain areas of the Capitol Reef National Park, Utah (Lee); and
- **H.R.249**, to redesignate certain facilities at Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park in honor of Congressman Bill Pascrell, Jr. (Rep. Pallone).

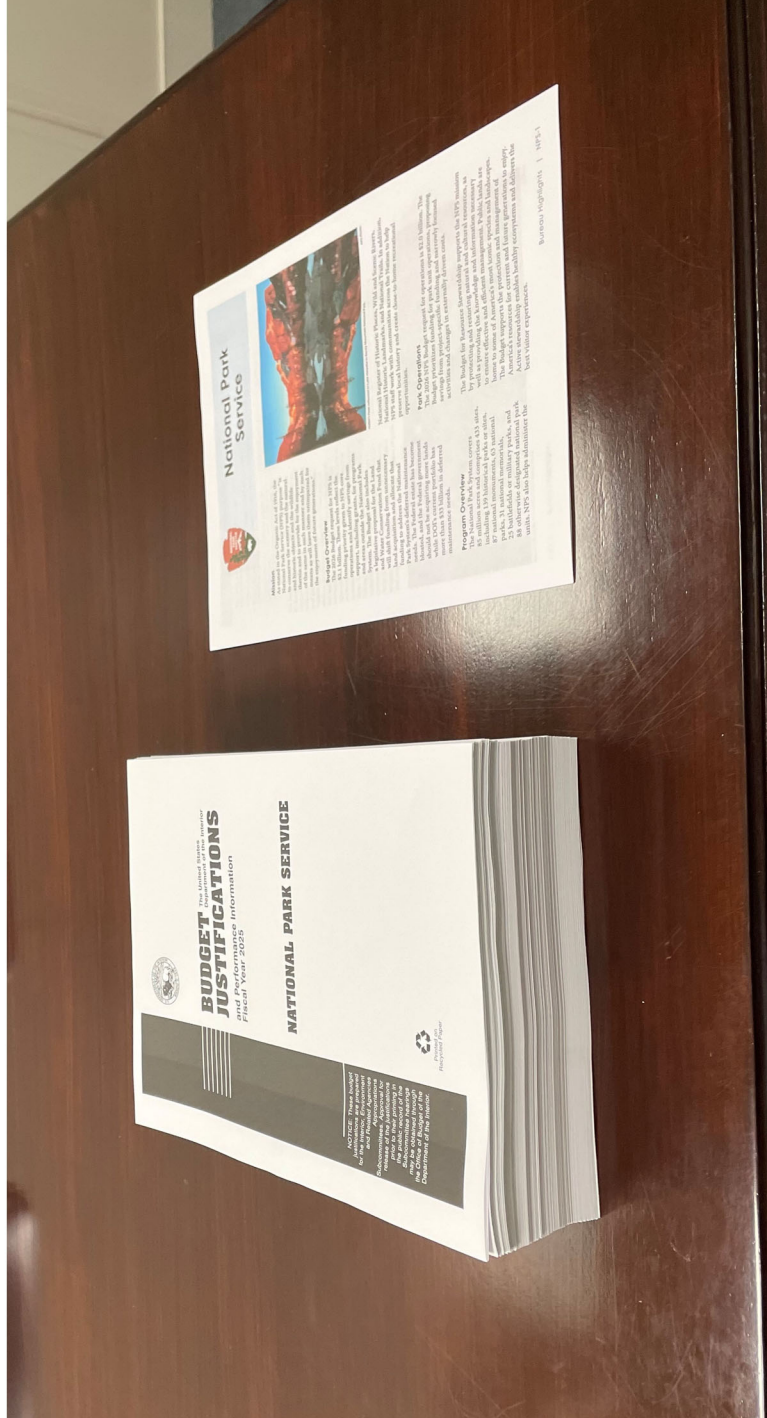
Senator DAINES. We have one witness today, Mr. Caldwell, the Associate Director of Park Planning, Facilities, and Lands at the National Park Service. Before hearing your testimony, I will now turn to Co-Chair King for his opening remarks.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ANGUS S. KING, JR.,
U.S. SENATOR FROM MAINE**

Senator KING. Thank you, Senator Daines, for your remarks, and the bipartisan partnership that we have developed over the years as we trade the gavel back and forth. I want to thank Mike Caldwell for coming to testify on behalf of the Park Service. Mike, you are a familiar face in front of this Committee, and we welcome you back.

I cannot come to this meeting quietly, however, while I believe our parks are under what can only be described as an attack. I want to first talk about staffing and funding levels for the parks. I have long criticized both Democratic and Republican administrations over the current underfunding and understaffing of our national parks. When our full Committee held a hearing to examine the Department of the Interior's budget request for FY25, in May of '24, the Department provided us with a budget justification. Here it is. This is the budget justification for FY25. And it laid out policy priorities, funding levels, the requests down to individual program units of the National Park Service, with detailed information on staffing. For the Park Service alone, this document, as you can see, is about 600 pages. And for Fiscal Year 2026, when we had a hearing on the budget of the Park Service, here is what we were presented, a pitiful six pages, one of which is blank. It's a five-page budget justification for the National Park Service compared to this. Nowhere in this document is there any reference to staffing levels, whether National Park Service wide or individual park units.

[Side-by-side comparison of the FY25 and FY26 National Park Service Budget Justifications follows:]

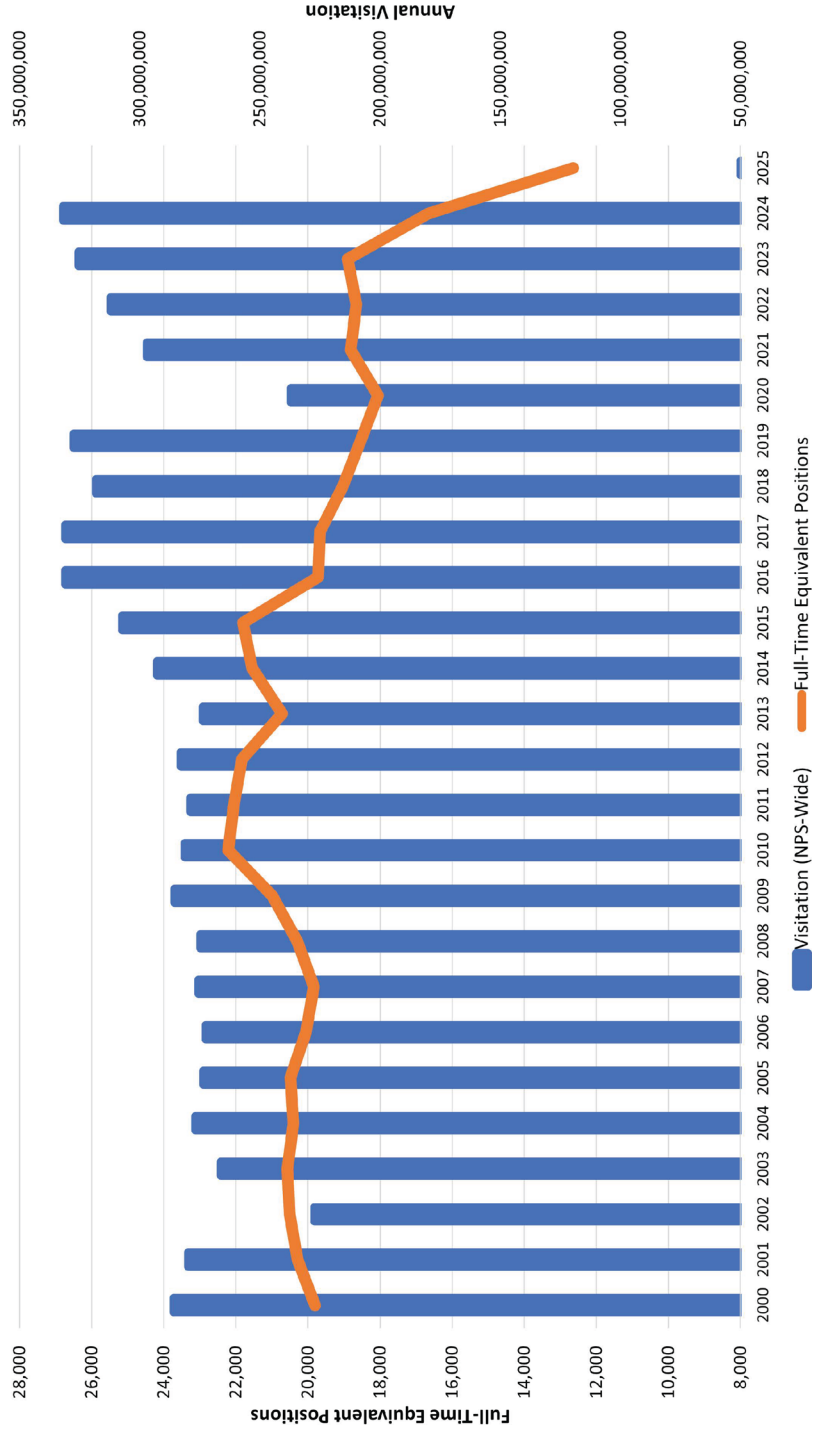


Senator KING. Now, I understand that Secretary Burgum and I may have differences on some of these policies and staffing levels, but we can't have a serious conversation about this issue if we don't have the data. If we don't have the data presented by the Department about where the staffing cuts are, where the—are there increases? But we don't have any of that data. What we have is a series of unserious funding requests for the Park Service, including massive cuts to operations, staffing, and maintenance. Here is this—a decrease of 31 percent for operations—almost a third—cutting the Park Service operations budget by a third. Forty-two percent for construction and major maintenance—cut by 42 percent. A decrease of 35 percent for construction planning.

Now, let me just give this graphically about where we are on staffing in the national parks. Here is where we are about the year 2000. And you can see the red line is FTEs in the National Park Service. And you see it sort of goes along at a fairly consistent level, then it starts to decline. Remember, I said I criticized both Democratic and Republican administrations. But look where it is now, compared with back here, we have cut our staff by almost half. At the same time, the visitation to the national parks is maintaining. In fact, last year I think was a record.

[Displayed chart follows:]

NPS Visitation vs. Staffing



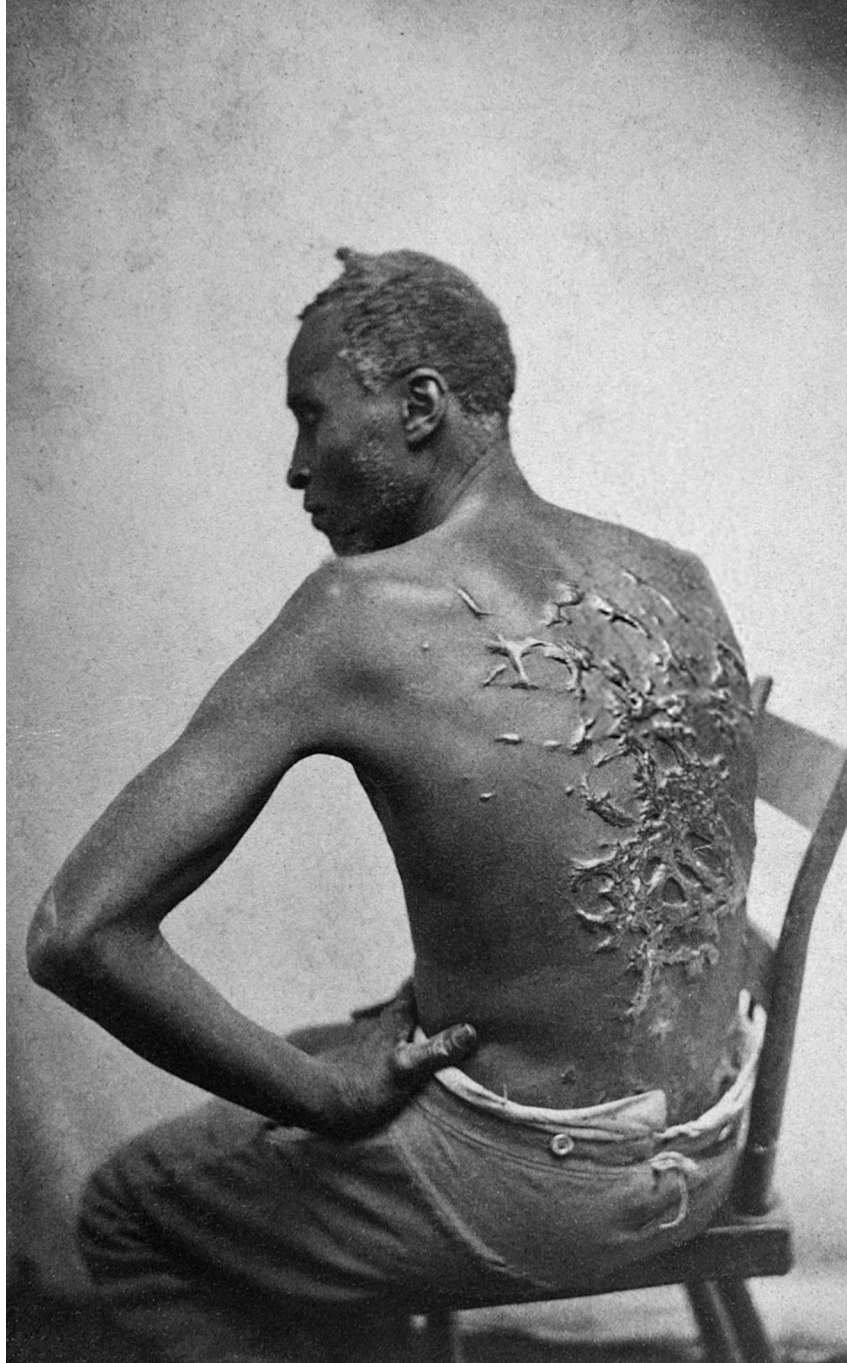
Senator KING. So, we've got more people coming and less people to greet them, educate them, and present data about that National Park. That is a shameful legacy. And what really bothers me about this is, I can't figure out what the motivation is. The amount of money saved here is miniscule in relation to the national budget or to the deficit or to whatever you want to compare it to, and yet, the damage is serious to probably the most popular federal program of all. Why target the national parks? It doesn't make any sense.

I am also worried and concerned about the effort to effectively whitewash our history, to rewrite history within the national park. Our history as a country of 250 years, we have triumphs, we have great prideful moments, we have accomplishments, heroism, a lot to be proud of and to relish and to learn about. But we also have some dark parts of our history. Like any history, we aren't really too excited about those, but they have to be addressed—slavery, the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II, segregation, the treatment of Native Americans in our history. Those are things that we can't avoid, we can't forget, and we don't want to forget them. I recently finished a biography of the Roman statesman Cicero, and he said something that really stuck with me. He said, to not know your history, to not know history, is to live your whole life as a child. In other words, you are giving away a lot of human knowledge if you don't understand history. And these chapters in our history, which we aren't proud of, we have to understand and to learn from them and never repeat them.

A couple of years ago, I was in the airport in Frankfurt, Germany. I met a young man, and we were sort of chatting, and he shared something that was really amazing that touched exactly on what I am talking about here today. He said that when he was in high school in Germany, he was required to go to a concentration camp. He was required to study the Holocaust. Talk about a dark portion of a nation's history. We are doing just the opposite. We are telling people, and young people that go to our parks, we don't want to bother you about slavery. It was uncomfortable. It might make you feel uncomfortable. We need to learn from our history so that we learn from it and that we don't repeat it. The administration is trying to rewrite history, and I just, when you compare it to Germany where young people are required to learn about their dark history because they don't want to repeat it, because they want to learn something from it, and we should take a lesson from that.

At Fort Pulaski National Monument in Georgia, the Department ordered the removal of the "Scourged Back" photograph.

[The photograph referred to follows:]



Senator KING. You have probably all seen it, of the slave with the awful scars on his back where he had been whipped. That was removed. For what purpose? Are we trying to erase the awful legacy of slavery, that it occurred? At Harpers Ferry, the Department has targeted the removal of several displays on slavery and the abolitionist movement—Harpers Ferry. That's why it's a monument. It was all about John Brown and slavery and abolition. To remove a display about slavery at Harpers Ferry is like removing model rockets from Cape Kennedy. I mean, it is astonishing that they should do such a thing.

The Jamaica Bay National Wildlife Refuge in New York, they removed signage which addressed Japanese internment and the forced dispossession of native people from their traditional homelands. This does not contribute to our citizens' understanding of their history and appreciation of their history. It doesn't change the history. It doesn't change what happened. It only changes our citizens' understanding of those things. This is what happens under authoritarian governments. If you go back in history, authoritarian governments, one of the things they try to do is change their history, to whitewash it, to change it, to change the story. So, after all that, I want to appreciate the way Steve Daines—Senator Daines and I have worked together, and we are going to continue to work together, but I cannot sit quietly and see America's best idea gutted for reasons that, to me, make absolutely no sense.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator DAINES. Senator King, thank you for your remarks.

There are senators, I believe, who want to make opening statements today. We will start with Senator Barrasso.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN BARRASSO,
U.S. SENATOR FROM WYOMING**

Senator BARRASSO. Well, thanks, Mr. Chairman, thank you also, Ranking Member King, for holding this important hearing, and I am grateful for the comments that you just made, both of the leaders here on the Committee. And I would like to briefly highlight one of my bills on today's agenda. It is S. 290, the Making National Parks Safer Act. It is bipartisan. It directs the Department of the Interior to develop a plan to upgrade National Park Service 9-1-1 call centers with next-generation 9-1-1 technology. The technology enables call centers to receive text messages, images, and videos, in addition to phone calls.

Our country's national parks receive hundreds of millions of visitors each year. In 2024, over eight million visitors came to our national parks in Wyoming. Folks travel from across the world to enjoy the great American outdoors, and for many families, these memories last a lifetime. That's why I think it is so vital that visitors to these great national parks have access to up-to-date safety and operational technology. Dispatch centers track bear biologists where they are working in the field. They support fire response strategies to mitigate damage to the land. And they ensure operational efficiency so park rangers can do their jobs. This bill improves the speed and accuracy of emergency responders in locating and assisting callers in need of emergency assistance. These moments make a difference between visitors being able to receive

quick care and continue their trip or facing more serious medical complications. In the event of a national disaster or technical issue, the call centers would be equipped to forward 9-1-1 calls to a center that is able to address immediate visitor needs. Our public safety technology needs improvements and resources to ensure that visitors can continue to enjoy our national parks without worry.

This is a bipartisan bill that ensures visitors who may need assistance can be reached in an accurate and timely manner. These much-needed updates will improve the operations of our national parks and protect the safety of visitors. Thanks to Senators Hickenlooper and Hyde-Smith for your support of the bill.

Thank you.

Senator DAINES. Thanks, Senator Barrasso.

Senator Heinrich.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. MARTIN HEINRICH,
U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW MEXICO**

Senator HEINRICH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank you and Co-Chair Angus King for convening today's hearing. Though I may not agree with every bill on the agenda, I am so grateful that we have the chance to spend some time talking about an issue that literally touches every corner of this country: our national parks and the role they play in America's incredible outdoor recreation economy. And I particularly look forward to working with you and the Co-Chair on the America the Beautiful Act.

Every single day, the public lands recreation economy contributes over \$350 million—a day—to our nation's economic health. And that's not a typo, it's a testament to just how deeply Americans value time outdoors and their nation's history, and how crucial our public lands are to supporting job growth, supporting small businesses, and rural communities. Our national parks and park system units are major contributors to the economic success that our public lands bring. Parks like Glacier, White Sands, and Acadia are iconic for a reason. They are world-class destinations that draw millions of visitors from around the world. And today's hearing also highlights something equally important: the hundreds of smaller national parks, historic sites, seashores, and monuments that really are the woven fabric of our nation's history and communities across the United States—places like Petroglyph National Monument or Pecos National Historical Park in New Mexico. These are places that make a real difference in people's lives. They preserve and celebrate our history—the good and the bad. They honor our heroes, they protect our wildlife and our watersheds, and they offer outdoor classrooms for students and provide spaces for families to connect with the outdoors. They offer us opportunities to escape the pressures of everyday life and enjoy the outdoors. And unfortunately, recent National Park Service management directives from this administration, including the dramatic budget cuts that the Co-Chair referenced, major staffing reductions, and proposals to divest of hundreds of National Park Service sites are a significant threat to the parks that Americans know and love.

What's more, the administration recently announced that Martin Luther King Day and Juneteenth would no longer be fee-free days on our public lands, despite being federal holidays. Instead, Flag

Day will be fee-free. It's a coincidence, I am sure, that while Flag Day isn't a federal holiday, it is the President's birthday. Rest assured folks, when this President is in the past, Martin Luther King Day and Juneteenth will not only have fee-free national park admission, but they will occupy, again, incredible places of pride in our nation's history.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator DAINES. Senator Heinrich, thank you.

Co-Chair King, I want to recognize the political astuteness of Senator Heinrich. He recognized Glacier Park and Acadia Park.

Senator KING. I noticed that.

Senator DAINES. Which, you know—

Senator HEINRICH. That was not by accident.

Senator DAINES. So, if the Senator would like more time, we certainly will yield to you.

Senator KING. He's a student of geography.

Senator DAINES. All right, that's very good. Thank you. You have warmed our hearts here.

Senator Padilla.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ALEX PADILLA,
U.S. SENATOR FROM CALIFORNIA**

Senator PADILLA. Thank you, Mr. Co-Chair.

I want to associate, first of all, myself with the comments from my colleagues, Senator King and Senator Heinrich, but want to also thank you for including in this hearing my Joshua Tree National Park Expansion Act, which builds on the late Senator Feinstein's efforts to protect our cherished California desert—Southern California, more specifically.

The bill on today's agenda actually combines two bills that previously passed this Committee by voice vote, one to expand the boundary of the Joshua Tree National Park, and one to rename the current Cottonwood Visitor Center at Joshua Tree National Park as the Senator Dianne Feinstein Visitor Center. As many of you know, Senator Feinstein was known as a great protector of the California desert. It is truly a part of her legacy. Among her many accomplishments, she expanded protections for nearly ten million acres and transformed the Joshua Tree National Monument into a national park. So, I can think of no better way to honor her legacy than by forever ensuring that visitors to Joshua Tree are reminded and taught about Senator Feinstein's enduring public lands legacy.

This bill would also expand the boundary of the national park to include land that was once part of Joshua Tree National Monument. In 2016, the National Park Service completed a comprehensive study that determined the land would indeed be feasible to be included in the park. The Park Service found that a boundary adjustment would allow for greater protection of existing habitat, restoration opportunities, and landscape connectivity for wildlife, including bighorn sheep. It would also expand visitor opportunities and access to the park. And knowing the concerns and priorities for some members of the Committee and other colleagues in the Senate, let me say the following: it's important to note that the National Park Service, through their study, which included a robust public process, the Park Service found that any pockets of critical

minerals are likely only present in negligible amounts and would not be economically viable for extraction. I am not trying to prohibit any development here, just trying to be realistic and balance our co-equal concerns.

Finally, I want to highlight another bill on the agenda of which I am a co-sponsor. Senator Schiff has the Rim of the Valley Corridor Preservation Act. This is an effort that started at the local level in the city of Los Angeles back in the late 1990s that I was a part of in a prior capacity. This bill would add the Rim of the Valley Corridor to the existing Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area and help protect some of the last wild and open spaces in the Los Angeles region. Having grown up in the San Fernando Valley, I can tell you firsthand how too many communities are denied true access to the outdoors and the benefit of being in natural environments. For communities who can look at the mountains, but feel like it's a world away to have access or try to get there, this bill would go a long way in improving upon those conditions. It has strong support from local communities. It has passed the House with bipartisan support in the previous two Congresses, and I hope that we can lend our support here in this Committee and as the Senate this session.

So, thank you again for including these important measures. I appreciate your time.

Senator DAINES. Senator Padilla, thank you.

Back in the old days, when we joined the Senate, we used to have a mentor assigned to us, a Republican and a Democrat. Dianne Feinstein was my Democrat mentor. So, thank you for the kind words about Dianne, and we are grateful for her service, and I like what you are doing there in naming that center for her.

All right, all member statements that were made will be added to the hearing record.

We will now proceed to the testimony from Senators not on this Committee. We will start by recognizing Senator Kaine. Welcome to the Committee.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. TIM KAINE, U.S. SENATOR FROM VIRGINIA

Senator KAINE. Thank you so much to our Co-Chairs Daines and King and to Committee members. It's a joy to join you and to be here together with my friend, Senator Van Hollen. And I want to thank you for considering S. 2708, the Appalachian Trail Centennial Act. I am very grateful for the bicameral, bipartisan collaboration with Senator Tillis on the Senate side and with Representatives Lawler and Beyer on the House side, working together on this bill.

As many of you know, I hiked the entire Appalachian Trail in Virginia in 2019, 560 miles from Harpers Ferry to the Tennessee-Virginia border, a few miles south of Damascus, Virginia. Now, some of you may not know that when you hike the trail, you don't use your own name, you use a trail name, and my trail name is Dog Bowl. So, if you hear anyone refer to me that way, you will know how they met me. The journey that I undertook in Virginia on the trail in 2019 gave me a deep, deep appreciation for the part-

nerships necessary to first initiate, dream, and then construct and now maintain into the future this wonderful asset.

One day, a friend who joined me on the hike who had been with me for a couple of days, together with his son, said, you know, this really isn't a trail, it's a community. And I said, what do you mean by that? And he goes, well, who built that shelter? Who carried in the picnic table? Who maintains the trail? Who drives the shuttle? Who runs the trail side hostel? Who takes the photographs, not only for National Geographic, but the selfies and Instagram photos that get posted that give people a sense of this asset even if they have never had a chance to visit it? It is a community.

So the bill that we have introduced is an effort to highlight and deepen the partnerships that have been necessary to have this trail be such a wonderful thing over its first 100 years. The Act highlights the essential work of the National Park Service, the Forest Service, state and local partners, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, and volunteers and trail clubs over the 2,200-mile length of the trail. The bill marks the ATC's 100th anniversary, strengthens their stewardship model, and supports volunteers and volunteer organizations while preserving federal oversight. The bill would establish, "designated operational partners to enhance collaboration on all the national trails in the United States." And additionally, the legislation would direct agencies to work with states and communities on land use, recreation, and donating surplus tools and equipment to volunteer groups to maintain the trail.

Senator Tillis, who got his start into public service in a local battle about a cycling trail in the suburbs of Charlotte, North Carolina—we introduced this bill because we have seen firsthand what happens when public and private partners are aligned. When they do align, our trails thrive. So, I look forward to working with the Committee, with local communities, with the National Park Service, and other key federal agencies and all partners. We have worked together to get the bill to the place where it is now and we absolutely commit to work together on any necessary additional improvements that will enable this bill to successfully reach the President's desk. I am really happy to be with you today.

Thank you.

Senator DAINES. Senator Kaine, thank you.

Senator Van Hollen.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN,
U.S. SENATOR FROM MARYLAND**

Senator VAN HOLLEN. Well, thank you. Thank you to Co-Chairs Daines and King, and Senator Heinrich, good to be with you and thank you for considering these bills.

I am going to start with a bill that's not on the agenda, very briefly, and the reason it's not on the agenda is because this Committee has previously heard the bill. And at about this time last year, it passed out of the Committee and the Senate unanimously. And my friend, Senator Kaine, and the Virginia delegation are on this bill. It's the Chesapeake National Recreation Area bill. I just urge my colleagues to work with us to pass that bill again. It was paired last year with Senator Wicker's bill on Vicksburg, and it really is an effort that has been years in the making, and we just

urge you to move forward this year, as we did last year, unanimously.

The two bills that are before you now have also been driven by community efforts, but also rise to the level, we believe, to have this kind of a National Park Service participation. The first is the Justice Thurgood Marshall National Historic Site Establishment Act, which is co-sponsored by my colleague here in the Senate, Senator Alsobrooks, and has been introduced in the House on a bipartisan basis. Congressman Mfume is the lead sponsor, but Congressman Andy Harris, part of our delegation, is also on that bill. So, it is bipartisan in the House. The bill would designate Baltimore's historic Public School 103, where Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall went to school, as an NPS affiliated area. Justice Marshall is best known as the first African American Supreme Court Justice and as the lead counsel in the landmark *Brown v. Board of Education* case that ended racial segregation in public schools. And his story, as we know, is one of perseverance, leadership, and a commitment to protecting the rights of all Americans. That story inspired some of the local church groups in Baltimore and others to come together to put together \$50 million of non-federal funding to help transform what had been P.S. 103 into a community center dedicated to Thurgood Marshall.

In 2019, Senator Cardin and I put forward a proposal to ask for a review of this project to see if National Park Service participation could help elevate this important story, and the study indicated that it would be a helpful and useful effort. And that is why we have the bill that is before you. It's important, you have to understand, that the affiliated area designation means that, unlike when a new unit is established, the site will not transfer to the Park Service, the current owners will maintain responsibility for the property in line with federal standards, maximizing access while—and I want to stress this—minimizing the need for financial support from the Federal Government.

The other piece of legislation before you is the Francis G. Newlands Memorial Removal Act of 2025, which would seek to remove a memorial to Francis Newlands at Chevy Chase Circle. For those of you here, if you drive out Connecticut Avenue when you are crossing from DC into Maryland, you go past Chevy Chase Circle. The area around Chevy Chase Circle was developed by Francis Newlands, and that is why this plaque was put in the circle in his honor at the time. The community on both sides of the circle wants to remove this plaque. Why? Because he was a former Senator from Nevada—that's not why—but just so you know, he is not a Marylander, does not have Maryland roots. He was a white supremacist and he worked to actively ensure that the development he built was inaccessible to blacks, jews, and working-class families. So, this is a memorial plaque that was put there because he was the developer of this area, but the development that he put together denied those groups access.

Just to give you a little flavor of his position, at the 1912 Democratic National Convention, he proposed a "white plank" to the party's platform that, among other things, called for repealing the 15th amendment, which, of course, is the amendment which gave African American men the right to vote. Despite that, the inscription

says, and I quote, “His statesmanship held true regard for the interests of all men.” Clearly, that inscription does not fit the individual that it’s there to memorialize. And as I said, the community organizations, the Montgomery County Council, the DC-Chevy Chase Association, the Maryland Chevy Chase Village and Town, they have all voted unanimously to act to have this removed. I looked at the administration’s position here and they are apparently opposing it for reasons rooted in partisan ideology or efforts to minimize the significance of historical figures. I would just say that his name is on there because he was the developer for this community, a development that, as I said, excluded individuals that we would all agree should never have been excluded.

So I hope the Committee will see to it that the community’s views are represented. The community should not have to forever see this memorial at Chevy Chase Circle that is in memory of a person with this kind of record. I thank you all.

Senator DAINES. Senator Van Hollen, thank you, and thanks to both Senators for testifying today.

Mr. Caldwell, if you could please join us at the witness table.

Mr. Caldwell, your full written testimony will be made part of the official hearing record.

Mr. Caldwell, you may proceed.

OPENING STATEMENT OF MIKE CALDWELL, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, PARK PLANNING, FACILITIES, AND LANDS, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Mr. CALDWELL. Chairman Daines, Co-Chair King, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the Department of the Interior’s views on 25 bills. I respectfully submit our full statements for the record and will summarize the Department’s views.

Many of the bills under consideration have the Department’s support. Consistent with Executive Order 14314, “Making America Beautiful Again by Improving our National Parks,” these proposals would enhance National Park Service operations, improve park safety and accessibility, and strengthen management of resources.

S. 290, the Making National Parks Safer Act, would direct the NPS to equip its emergency communication centers with next-generation 9-1-1 technology. We welcome the opportunity to work with the Subcommittee to create a path to help the NPS meet the goals of this initiative.

S. 601 would remove deed restrictions from an NPS parcel transferred to the city of Paducah, Kentucky, allowing the city to sell or repurpose the property to meet community needs. The Department supports this bill.

S. 1088 would authorize a memorial on the National Mall in either Area I or the Reserve to honor the women who worked on the home front during World War II. The Department supports establishing this commemorative work. The National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission reviewed S. 1088 and advised the memorial sponsor to work with the NPS on a site selection study. The Department concurs, and is committed to supporting that process.

S. 1353 and S. 2546 would extend authorities to modify or establish memorials in the District of Columbia to the U.S. Army Second Infantry Division and to EMS professionals. We support these extensions.

S. 1377 directs the Department to maintain a genetically diverse horse herd in Theodore Roosevelt National Park and develop a cost-effective management plan that protects both the herd and park resources.

S. 2308, the PATRIOT Parks Act, reflects the President's initiative to enact America-first entry fee policies across the National Park System.

S. 2385, the Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History Act, aligns with the Secretary's Order 3431, to ensure NPS sites reflect our nation's extraordinary heritage and record of advancing liberty and prosperity.

S. 2970 would authorize the use of off-highway vehicles in designated areas of Capitol Reef National Park, and require the NPS to adopt the State of Utah's OHV definition. The Department supports the goal of expanding recreational opportunities at the park, and would welcome the opportunity to work with the Subcommittee on technical amendments.

Regarding S. 858, the Hershel "Woody" Williams National Medal of Honor Monument Location Act, the Department looks forward to supporting the building of the proposed monument in a place of national honor.

Regarding S. 1135, the Bonneville Shoreline Trail Feasibility Study, the Department recommends the bill be amended to remove NPS as the agency responsible for conducting the study, as USDA is better suited to lead it.

There are also several bills under consideration that the Department opposes.

S. 573 conflicts with Secretary's Order 3424, which designated the name of Mount McKinley in Alaska.

S. 1926 conflicts with Executive order 14208, which directs agencies to repeal or revise policies limiting plastic product availability without strong scientific or statutory justification.

S. 2369 conflicts with Executive order 14253, which directs the Department to preserve and restore memorials removed or altered in recent years due to partisan ideology and efforts to minimize the significance of historical figures.

S. 2708, the Appalachian Trail Centennial Act, raises concern by potentially altering the intent and implementation of the National Trails System Map.

Other bills on the Subcommittee's agenda would establish or expand NPS units or direct new studies, all of which would require additional resources. The NPS remains focused on addressing critical needs within its existing portfolio. For this reason, the Department opposes H.R. 249, S. 730, S. 791, S. 1131, S. 1777, S. 1870, and S. 2270. The Department takes the position of "do not oppose" on S. 446, S. 1280, and S. 1518.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my testimony. I am happy to answer any questions you or the Committee have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Caldwell follows:]

**Testimony of Michael A. Caldwell,
Associate Director, Park Planning, Facilities and Lands
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior**

**Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
Subcommittee on National Parks**

December 9, 2025

Chairman Daines, Ranking Member King, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the Department of the Interior's views on the following legislation: H.R. 249, to redesignate certain facilities at Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park in honor of Congressman Bill Pascrell, Jr.; S. 290, Making National Parks Safer Act; S. 446, to prohibit Big Cypress National Preserve from being designated as wilderness or as a component of the National Wilderness System; S. 573, to designate a mountain in the State of Alaska as Denali; S. 601, to remove restrictions from a parcel of land in Paducah, Kentucky; S. 730, African Burial Ground International Memorial Museum and Educational Center Study Act; S. 791, Justice Thurgood Marshall National Historic Site Establishment Act of 2025; S. 858, Hershel Woody Williams National Medal of Honor Monument Location Act; S. 1088, WWII Women's Memorial Location Act; S. 1131, Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve Establishment Act; S. 1135, to amend the National Trails System Act to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study on the feasibility of designating the Bonneville Shoreline Trail; S. 1280, Down East Remembrance Act; S. 1353, to extend the authority for modifications to the Second Division Memorial in the District of Columbia; S. 1377, Theodore Roosevelt National Park Wild Horses Protection Act; S. 1518, Strengthening America's Turning Point Act; S. 1777, Joshua Tree National Park Expansion Act; S. 1870, Rim of the Valley Corridor Preservation Act; S. 1926, Reducing Waste in National Parks Act; S. 2270, Myakka Wild and Scenic River Act of 2025; S. 2308, PATRIOT Parks Act; S. 2369, Francis G. Newlands Memorial Removal Act; S. 2385, Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History Act; S. 2546, to provide for an extension of the legislative authority of the National Emergency Medical Services Memorial Foundation to establish a commemorative work in the District of Columbia and its environs; and S. 2708, Appalachian Trail Centennial Act; S. 2970, to authorize the use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs) in certain areas of the Capitol Reef National Park.

H.R. 249, to redesignate certain facilities at Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park in honor of Congressman Bill Pascrell, Jr.

H.R. 249 would redesignate the Great Falls Scenic Overlook Trail Bridge and Overlook Park at Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park as the "Bill Pascrell, Jr. Scenic Overlook Trail Bridge" and "Bill Pascrell, Jr. Overlook Park" respectively.

The NPS generally discourages the naming of park features except when there is a compelling justification and at least five years have elapsed since the death of the person. Accordingly, the Department does not support H.R. 249.

S. 290, Making National Parks Safer Act

The Department supports S. 290. S. 290 would direct the Secretary of the Interior to upgrade 911 service infrastructure in units of the National Park System for better connectivity and interoperability using common standards and modern communication technologies and formats. NG911 systems are designed to transmit and receive bandwidth-intensive data—for example, video and images—that can enhance situational awareness and lead to better-informed response decisions. The systems use geospatial data to locate callers. Upgrading legacy systems could help save lives and equip the National Park Service (NPS) to better protect our nation’s natural and cultural resources.

The legislation directs the Department to complete an assessment of the implementation status of NG911 at existing NPS emergency communication centers and to estimate the cost to purchase, operate and maintain NG911 throughout the system. Subsequent to the assessment, S. 290 directs the Department to develop a plan to install NG911 at identified locations.

The NPS has 41 recognized dispatch centers that provide law enforcement and emergency services communications across more than 125 NPS sites and mutual aid agencies. In addition, numerous parks receive dispatch services through agreements with federal, state, or other local partners. The assessment would focus on these existing 41 dispatch centers, although the plan may reflect a future state of consolidation to best meet mission requirements. In addition, each state has its own laws that establish the framework for 911 services and NG911. These statutes outline the responsibilities of state agencies, local governments, and public safety entities in providing and managing 911 services including NG911. Each of these entities has the power to decide what solutions, technologies, and vendors it will use to achieve NG911, which will make interoperability more difficult to achieve. State jurisdiction regarding 911 and their respective NG911 implementation plans will impact the feasibility of upgrading all NPS systems.

It is worth acknowledging that transitioning to NG911 is a resource-intensive effort, requiring significant investment in infrastructure, software, and training, and it may take multiple years for implementation. We would welcome the opportunity to work with the Subcommittee to create a path for NPS to obtain the resources necessary to meet this initiative’s goals.

S. 446, To prohibit Big Cypress National Preserve from being designated as wilderness or as a component of the National Wilderness System

S. 446 would prohibit a wilderness designation within the Big Cypress National Preserve (Preserve). Under the Wilderness Act, only Congress has the authority to designate wilderness areas. Accordingly, the Department does not oppose the bill.

The law designating the Preserve as a unit of the National Park System ensured the protection of natural and cultural assets in the Big Cypress Swamp while simultaneously providing a number of different public land uses, including hunting, fishing, off-road vehicle use, private camp ownership, and traditional use and occupancy rights for Native American Tribes. The NPS remains committed to working with stakeholders, local and state officials, and Tribes—the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians and the Seminole Tribe of Florida—on all issues of concern within the Preserve.

S. 573, to designate a mountain in the State of Alaska as Denali

S. 573 would rename Mount McKinley, located within Denali National Park and Preserve, as Denali.

On his first day in office, President Trump issued Executive Order 14172 to restore names that honor American greatness to our national treasures, including natural wonders. The Executive Order directed the Secretary of the Interior (Secretary) to reinstate the name “Mount McKinley” to America’s highest peak, which it officially held for 118 years, from 1897 to 2015. Accordingly, the Administration strongly opposes S. 573.

On February 14, 2025, Secretary Burgum issued Secretary’s Order 3424, which directed the U.S. Board on Geographic Names to immediately take all actions necessary to update the Geographic Names Information System to rename Denali to Mount McKinley. Importantly, the national park surrounding Mount McKinley retains the name Denali National Park and Preserve, honoring the land and heritage of Alaska while ensuring that America’s highest summit continues to bear the name of a great American President.

President William McKinley, the 25th President of the United States, deserves to be remembered for his steadfast leadership. He heroically led our Nation to victory in the Spanish-American War, ushered in a new era of American strength abroad, and presided over rapid economic growth and prosperity at home. President McKinley championed tariffs to protect U.S. workers, boost domestic production, and drive the industrial expansion that propelled America onto the world stage. He was tragically assassinated in an attack that cut short a presidency defined by patriotism and prosperity, but his name should continue to inspire future generations. For these reasons, the Administration strongly urges Congress to reject S. 573 and preserve the name Mount McKinley.

S. 601, to remove restrictions from a parcel of land in Paducah, Kentucky

S. 601 would direct the Secretary to undertake action to remove deed restrictions from a land parcel transferred to the City of Paducah, Kentucky, through the National Park Service's Federal Lands to Parks program. Through this public-benefit conveyance program, the National Park Service partners with the U.S. General Services Administration to transfer surplus Federal real property to state and local governments for public parks and recreation use while saving taxpayer dollars by reducing the Federal inventory of unneeded Federal land and facilities.

Removing these restrictions would allow the City to sell or repurpose the land for purposes other than public recreation. The Department supports S.601 and looks forward to working with the bill sponsor to meet the community's needs.

S. 730, African Burial Ground International Memorial Museum and Educational Center Act

S. 730 would direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to assess the suitability and feasibility of establishing a museum and educational center at the African Burial Ground National Monument, to be known as the "African Burial Ground International Memorial Museum and Educational Center" (museum). The bill provides that the museum would serve as a permanent living memorial to the enslaved who are buried at the African Burial Ground and to other enslaved Africans and African Americans. S. 730 also directs the Secretary to submit a report to Congress on the results of the study.

The site encompassed by the existing monument is among the oldest and is the largest known urban burial site of enslaved and free Africans in the United States. It is one of the most significant archeological discoveries in the 20th century, with an estimated 15,000 burials. The monument provides the opportunity to study, contemplate, and discuss the history and contributions of Africans in the building of the Americas.

The Department recognizes the importance of the African Burial Ground and the significance of the historical record and events that it marks. However, we do not support S. 730, as the National Park Service is focusing its resources on addressing other critical needs, including reducing the deferred maintenance backlog. The existing African Burial Ground National Monument marks the significance of the relevant events and provides ample opportunity to interpret the history and themes described in S. 730.

S. 791, Justice Thurgood Marshall National Historic Site Establishment Act of 2025

The Department recognizes the importance of Thurgood Marshall as a preeminent figure of national significance, however, we do not support S. 791, as the National Park Service (NPS) is focusing its resources on addressing other critical needs, including reducing the deferred maintenance backlog.

S. 791 would establish the elementary school attended by Thurgood Marshall, commonly known as Public School (P.S.) 103, as a national historic site and would provide for the administration of the national historic site as an affiliated area of the National Park System. The national historic site would not be owned or managed by the NPS, but it would be required to be managed in accordance with any law generally applicable to units of the National Park System. The Secretary would be authorized to provide technical assistance and enter into agreements with the management entity, The Beloved Community Service Corporation, to provide financial assistance for marketing, marking, interpreting, and preserving the national historic site.

The 2019 John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act (P.L. 116-9) directed the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of P.S. 103. The special resource study findings were transmitted to Congress in January 2023. The study found that P.S. 103 possesses national significance for its association with Thurgood Marshall and that it meets the suitability criteria as it exemplifies an important aspect of American history not adequately represented and protected elsewhere. However, the site did not meet the criterion for feasibility as an NPS unit, due to the proposed future sale and operational plans for the renovated building.

We recognize that the January 2023 study report discusses the potential for an NPS affiliated area designation, which does not authorize the site as an NPS unit but would permit the NPS to provide technical and financial assistance. However, the NPS is focusing its resources on addressing other critical needs, including reducing the deferred maintenance backlog.

S. 858, Hershel Woody Williams National Medal of Honor Monument Location Act

S. 858 would authorize the National Medal of Honor Monument to be established in the Reserve, the central cross-axis of the National Mall, as described by the Commemorative Works Act (40 USC 89 et seq.) (CWA). The Department strongly supports honoring the extraordinary acts of our nation's Medal of Honor recipients, and we look forward to supporting the building of the proposed monument in a place of national honor and prominence.

S. 1088, World War II Women's Memorial Location Act

S. 1088 would authorize the establishment of a memorial to commemorate the commitment and service of the women who worked on the home front during World War II in Area I or within the Reserve, the central cross-axis of the National Mall, as described by the Commemorative Works Act (40 USC 89 et seq.) (CWA). The Department supports establishing a commemorative work to honor the service and sacrifice of these American women.

On May 12, 2025, the National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission (Commission) reviewed S. 1088 and its companion bill, H.R. 2290. In the Commission's letter regarding S. 1088 and H.R. 2290 to the chairs of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee and the House Natural Resources Committee, the Commission recommended that Congress decline to authorize locating the memorial on the National Mall at this time and for the memorial sponsor to work with the

National Park Service (NPS) to develop a site selection study, as required by the CWA, to determine a proper location for the memorial. The Department concurs with the Commission's recommendations, and the NPS is committed to working with the memorial sponsor to develop a site selection study.

S. 1131, Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve Establishment Act

S. 1131 would redesignate Ocmulgee Mounds National Historical Park as Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and authorize the establishment of Ocmulgee Mounds National Preserve, subject to the acquisition of sufficient land to constitute a manageable park unit. The two components would collectively be designated as a single NPS unit called "Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve." The Department does not support S. 1131 as the bill would increase the federal estate and the NPS is focusing its resources on addressing other critical needs, including reducing the deferred maintenance backlog.

S.1135, to amend the National Trails System Act to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study on the feasibility of designating the Bonneville Shoreline Trail

S. 1135 would direct the National Park Service to conduct a feasibility study for the designation of the Bonneville Shoreline Trail (BST) under the National Trails System Act (NTSA).

Most of the federal estate comprising the BST, including several existing and proposed trail segments, cross or border lands already managed by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) within the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). That agency has, in many cases, already engaged in planning, design, maintenance, and management considerations for those segments. Given this existing on-the-ground involvement and the NTSA's requirement for feasibility studies to assess factors such as resource impacts, land ownership, user safety, and long-term management, the USFS is better suited to lead the study. A USFS directed study would ensure that the agency with existing jurisdiction and institutional knowledge of the relevant lands evaluates the Trail's viability and long-term stewardship in concert with stakeholders. Accordingly, the Department recommends the bill be amended to remove NPS as the agency responsible for conducting the feasibility study.

S. 1280, Down East Remembrance Act

S. 1280 would codify the exact latitudes and longitudes of six creeks located within or near Cape Lookout National Seashore (Seashore) and renames them after eight individuals who lost their lives in a plane crash near Drum Inlet, off the coast of North Carolina and near the Seashore on February 13th, 2022. These six creeks are located within or near the Seashore. The tragedy came as devastating news to the citizens of Carteret County, North Carolina, where all eight victims resided. This close-knit eastern North Carolina community has struggled to come to terms with the sudden loss of life, especially for young people on the brink of adulthood. The Department does not oppose S. 1280.

S. 1353, to extend the authority for modifications to the Second Division Memorial in the District of Columbia

S. 1353 would reauthorize the authority granted in Public Law 115-91 for the Second Indianhead Division Association, Inc., Scholarship and Memorials Foundation (Foundation) to place additional commemorative elements or engravings on the raised platform or stonework of the existing Second Division Memorial located in President's Park in Washington, DC, until September 30, 2032. The Department supports S. 1353.

The Second Division Memorial was dedicated on July 18, 1936, to honor Second Division soldiers who lost their lives in World War I. On August 15, 1957, Congress authorized an addition to the memorial to honor the Second Division soldiers lost in World War II and the Korean War, which was completed in 1962. On December 12, 2017, Congress authorized a modification to the memorial to allow for recognition of soldiers who lost their lives while serving in Korea on the Demilitarized Zone from 1965-1991, Iraq from 2003-2010, and Afghanistan from 2009-2013. This authority expired on December 12, 2024.

On May 12, 2025, the National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission (Commission) reviewed S. 1353. In the Commission's letter regarding S. 1353 to the chair of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, it unanimously supported the bill's authorization extension. Since the passage of P.L. 115-91, the memorial modification design plan has been approved by the National Capital Planning Commission and Commission of Fine Arts. The modification is consistent with the previous approach to the memorial's expansion and does not alter the existing memorial fabric. Additionally, the memorial is located in a grassy lawn without a paved connection to the surrounding sidewalk network. The modification plan would remedy this and greatly improve the accessibility of the memorial.

S. 1377, Theodore Roosevelt National Park Wild Horses Protection Act

The Department supports S. 1377. The bill amends the 1947 Act (61 Stat. 54, 9 chapter 41; 16 U.S.C. 245) that established Theodore Roosevelt National Park. It requires the Secretary to maintain a genetically diverse herd of horses in the South Unit of Theodore Roosevelt National Park with a population of at least 150 horses. The bill also requires the Secretary to develop a cost-effective plan for managing the horses that ensures the Park's natural resources are not adversely affected. The Secretary is restricted from removing any horses from the park unless that removal is carried out in accordance with a plan to maintain a genetically diverse herd, in the case of an emergency, or to protect public health and safety. Finally, the bill requires the Secretary to annually monitor, assess, and make available to the public, findings regarding horse population, structure, and health in the park.

The Department is committed to maintaining a healthy, genetically viable horse population in Theodore Roosevelt National Park. The park manages a herd descended from abandoned local stock confined to the South Unit of the park in the late 1950s, when a perimeter fence was installed

to contain reintroduced Plains Bison. Since that time, the herd has thrived and grown to approximately 200 horses in 2025.

Because the park is fenced, the populations of bison and horses must be managed for the health of the species that share the space. A variety of study strategies enable park staff to collect data and use a science-based process to determine how best to balance these resources. This valuable information will inform management decisions and practices (such as the one identified in the bill) to maintain a healthy, genetically viable herd in balance with other mammals and available natural resources.

S. 1518, Strengthening America's Turning Point Act

S. 1518 would redesignate the Saratoga National Historical Park as the “Saratoga National Battlefield Park (Park). The Park recently completed a \$6.6 million Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) project in preparation for the 250th anniversary commemorations by replacing waysides and pathways. The Park is working closely with the County and Commission, planning multiple events up to and throughout 2027, which is the 250th anniversary of the Battles of Saratoga (September 19, 1777 and October 7, 1777) and the British Army Surrender (October 17, 1777).

Because Saratoga National Historical Park meets the standards, under our general criteria for designation, as either a National Historical Park or a National Battlefield Park, the Department does not object to this redesignation. We note that changing all of the signs, displays, printed materials, and waysides, including new waysides installed last year as part of a GAOA project, would be phased as these resources are replaced over time. All of these changes are extensive, require additional resources, and could not be completed before the 250th anniversaries to be celebrated in 2027. The National Park Service will continue to work to increase public awareness and understanding of the role Saratoga played in the founding of this country.

S. 1777, Joshua Tree National Park Expansion Act

S. 1777 would modify the boundary of Joshua Tree National Park to include approximately 20,149 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land adjacent to the park. Incorporating these additional lands into the park would require new and sustained funding to ensure proper management, visitor services, and protection of natural and cultural resources. The NPS must prioritize its resources on critical existing needs, such as addressing deferred maintenance and other projects vital to the continued preservation, accessibility, and enjoyment of lands that it currently manages. Therefore, the Department does not support the bill.

In 2016, the National Park Service, in cooperation with the BLM, conducted a study of the proposed expansion area and found that the lands were suitable for inclusion in Joshua Tree National Park. The land proposed for the boundary expansion was part of Joshua Tree National Monument when it was initially designated but was later removed due to presence of patented mining claims containing substantial deposits of iron ore. The Department notes there are hundreds

of current mining and mill site claims, as well as an active mining plan in the proposed expansion area.

S. 1870, Rim of the Valley Corridor Preservation Act

S. 1870 would expand the boundary of the Santa Monica Mountains NRA to include the area known as the Rim of the Valley Corridor, the mountainous areas that surround the San Fernando, Simi, and Conejo Valleys northwest of Los Angeles. The proposed Rim of the Valley Unit would be administered as part of the Santa Monica Mountains NRA, and an updated management plan for the park would be required within three years of enactment. Provisions in the bill ensure that the inclusion of the Rim of the Valley lands in the Santa Monica Mountains NRA would not interfere with specified existing uses. The NPS owns a relatively small proportion of land within the boundary of the Santa Monica Mountains NRA and operates through a collaborative partnership-based management model with other entities.

The NPS is prioritizing resources on critical existing needs, such as addressing deferred maintenance and other projects vital to the continued preservation, accessibility, and enjoyment of existing parks. Therefore, we do not support S. 1870.

S. 1926, Reducing Waste in National Parks Act

S. 1926 would require the Director of the National Park Service to establish a mandatory program to reduce disposable plastic products, potentially eliminating the sale and distribution of these items in units of the National Park System.

On May 20, 2025, Secretary Burgum issued Secretary's Order 3430 (SO 3430), rescinding Secretary's Order 3407 (SO 3407) issued during the previous Administration. SO 3407 had established a Department-wide policy to phase out single-use plastic products and packaging. Implementation of the rescinded SO 3407 had presented operational and logistical challenges across a range of Departmental functions, including visitor services, field operations, and procurement. It had imposed mandates that restricted locally appropriate solutions and did not adequately account for cost, performance, or safety considerations.

SO 3430 is consistent with Executive Order 14208, issued by President Trump in February 2025, which directs Executive departments and agencies to repeal or revise any policies that limit the availability of plastic products without a compelling scientific or statutory basis. It underscores the importance of agency discretion, operational flexibility, and product performance in procurement and public service delivery. Under SO 3430, Department bureaus, including the National Park Service, may continue voluntary efforts to reduce plastic waste tailored to local conditions. The Department believes such voluntary, flexible efforts are more effective than the rigid, one-size-fits-all mandates proposed in S. 1926. For these reasons, the Department does not support S. 1926.

S. 2270, Myakka Wild and Scenic River Act of 2025

S. 2270 designates segments of the Myakka River – totaling approximately 34 miles – as components of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The bill would provide that the comprehensive management plan developed by the Myakka River Management Coordinating Council (Council) satisfies the requirements under section 3(d) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. It would require the Secretary to coordinate the wild and scenic river administration responsibilities with the Council and authorize entering into cooperative agreements with state and local partners and stakeholders. The bill would confirm that the river would not become a unit of the National Park System, allow for land acquisition from willing sellers or via donation and require the Secretary to select a National Park Service (NPS) representative to the Council.

A 1984 Congressionally authorized NPS Wild and Scenic Rivers study determined that 37 miles of the Myakka River were eligible for inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Only a portion of the river, managed by the State of Florida, was found suitable because the remainder was surrounded by private land. Consequently, supporters of protecting the Myakka's wild and scenic values successfully pursued non-federal methods of protection and management of those lands.

The Department recognizes the long-standing work of state and local partners to protect the Myakka River's values. However, currently, the NPS must prioritize limited resources on critical existing needs, such as addressing deferred maintenance and other projects vital to the continued preservation, accessibility, and enjoyment of existing parks.

S. 2308, PATRIOT Parks Act

The Department supports S. 2308, which codifies President Donald J. Trump's July 3, 2025, Executive Order 14314, Making America Beautiful Again by Improving Our National Parks. In the Executive Order, President Trump announced the Administration's policy to preserve national parks, refuges and public lands for American families in future generations by increasing entry fees for foreign tourists, improving affordability for United States residents, and expanding opportunities to enjoy America's splendid national treasures. The Order directed the Department to raise entry and pass fees to federal lands for nonresidents. Last year, an estimated 22 million international visitors contributed to the record 331 million visits across the National Park System contributing to the deferred maintenance needs of federal roads, buildings, utilities, and other facilities. Addressing these repairs is crucial for preserving the beauty and accessibility of our parks for future generations.

Consistent with the executive order, the Department on November 25, 2025, announced a series of administrative updates to the America the Beautiful Pass program. These changes include a new pricing structure for international visitors, digital delivery of passes, updated patriotic fee-free days for U.S. residents, and expanded coverage to include two motorcycles per pass. These actions are

designed to modernize the program, improve operational efficiency, and ensure that international visitors contribute more directly to the stewardship of our national parks.

We look forward to working with the Committee to align S. 2308 with the Department's implementation of Executive Order 14314.

S. 2369, Francis G. Newlands Memorial Removal Act

Executive Order 14253, "Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History," issued by President Donald J. Trump on March 27, 2025, establishes a clear policy for federal memorials, statues, and markers. It directs the Department to preserve and, when necessary, restore memorials that may have been removed or altered in recent years for reasons rooted in partisan ideology or efforts to minimize the significance of historical figures.

S. 2369 would require the Secretary of the Interior to make several modifications to the memorial fountain located in Chevy Chase Circle. Specifically, the bill calls for the removal of a brass [bronze] plaque bearing the name "Senator Francis G. Newlands"; a stone at the south end of the fountain bearing the name "Francis Griffith Newlands" and the related inscription; and the name "Newlands Memorial Fountain" carved into the upper face of the memorial fountain's coping stones. In addition, the bill requires the Secretary to offer the removed items to the descendants of Francis Newlands. If the descendants do not claim the items within 60 days, the removed items would become part of the National Park Service museum collection for Rock Creek Park.

Francis Newlands, the founder of Chevy Chase, Maryland, represented Nevada in the U.S. Congress from 1893 to 1917, first in the U.S. House of Representatives and later in the U.S. Senate. The Newlands Reclamation Act of 1902, which created the Bureau of Reclamation and led to the creation of dams and irrigation projects in the American West, was named for him. The removal of this memorial inscription conflicts with the Administration's stated policy to protect historic memorials from alteration for ideological reasons. For this reason, the Department does not support S. 2369.

S. 2385, Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History Act

The Department supports S. 2385, which would codify President Trump's Executive Order 14253, "Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History" (EO 14253). The bill, following EO 14253, sets the policy of restoring Federal sites dedicated to history to solemn and uplifting monuments that remind Americans of our extraordinary heritage, consistent progress toward becoming a more perfect Union, and unmatched record of advancing liberty, prosperity, and human flourishing. The bill effectuates these policies with respect to the Smithsonian Institution and its museums and centers. It directs the Secretary of the Interior to improve the infrastructure of Independence National Historical Park by July 4, 2026. It also directs the Secretary to review public monuments, memorials, statues, markers, or similar properties within the Department's jurisdiction and to restore Federal sites dedicated to history, including parks and museums, in accordance with policy.

The Department is committed to this Administration's policy and, on May 20, 2025, Secretary Burgum issued Secretary's Order 3431 (SO 3431), which directed each of the Department's land management bureaus to take all actions necessary to implement EO 14253. The bureaus are implementing SO 3431, including review and identification of public monuments, memorials, statues, markers, and plaques that have been removed or altered since the beginning of 2020, and of public-facing content that inappropriately disparages Americans or emphasizes matters unrelated to the beauty, abundance, or grandeur of natural features. The public-facing content includes exhibits, waysides, films, publications, signs, retail items, and any media projects that are in development. Each bureau has posted signage (with a QR code that links to the bureau's website for collecting entries) at its sites to ensure awareness and allow for public input on the state of the property, its management, and its alignment with EO 14253 and SO 3431.

With respect to Independence National Historical Park, where the Declaration of Independence was signed on July 4, 1776, the NPS has initiated the Independence Square Improvement Project. This project will address preservation needs at Independence Hall, Congress Hall, Old City Hall, and other historic buildings and features. Improvements include the construction of accessible ramps, the rehabilitation of interior and exterior finishes (including masonry, wood, plaster, metals, and monument restoration), and interior painting to preserve historic integrity. This project ensures historical narratives reflect the richness of American history, addresses deferred maintenance, and improves infrastructure. Completion is targeted to align with America250 commemorative events.

The Department defers to other entities for their views on relevant provisions of S. 2385.

S. 2546, to provide for an extension of the legislative authority of the National Emergency Medical Services Memorial Foundation to establish a commemorative work in the District of Columbia and its environs

S. 2546 extends the legislative authority of the National Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Memorial Foundation (Foundation) to establish a commemorative work in the District of Columbia and its environs until November 3, 2032. The Department supports S. 2546.

The Foundation received its initial seven- year authority from Congress to establish a commemorative work that honors the commitment and sacrifice of EMS professionals in 2018. In the ensuing seven years, the Foundation has made significant progress in navigating the complex site selection process and advancing the preliminary design concepts. However, additional time is needed to bring this worthwhile national tribute to completion.

The National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission (Commission) reviewed S. 2546 and its companion bill, H.R. 2196 and affirmed that extending the authority of the National EMS Memorial Foundation is essential to ensure the successful establishment of a memorial that will

stand as an enduring tribute to the dedication and sacrifice of the men and women who respond in moments of greatest need.

The Department agrees with the Commission's recommendation. EMS professionals serve on the front lines of emergencies, often at great personal risk, providing lifesaving care in times of crisis. Extending this legislative authority will give the Foundation the certainty it needs to complete its mission and ensure that our Nation properly recognizes the dedication and sacrifice of these public servants.

S. 2708, Appalachian Trail Centennial Act

S. 2708 would establish the Appalachian Trail Conservancy as the first Designated Operational Partner for the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, and provides an opportunity and criteria for additional national trails partners to become Designated Operational Partners for other national scenic and national historic trails.

The bill would authorize a Designated Operational Partner to request that the Secretary (or Secretary of Agriculture with respect to trails administered by the Secretary of Agriculture) and the U.S. Attorney consider violations of property rights held by the federal government and make a determination on appropriate action within a prescribed time frame. It would also require a Designated Operational Partner to periodically develop and submit to the Secretary and the heads of any other appropriate Federal land management agencies a proposed priority list for land and resource protection for the applicable covered trail. The Secretary must then prioritize the use of funds for land identified for Federal protection in the list, except when the Secretary has determined otherwise for a specific priority and, in that case, the Secretary must provide a written justification to the Designated Operational Partner. Other provisions in S. 2708 include requirements and authorities related to cooperative agreements, volunteer services, comprehensive plans, visitation assessments, economic impact assessments, trail planning, appropriations, and a Federal Advisory Committee Act exemption.

America's national scenic and historic trails form a network of well over 50,000 miles that protects and links together many of America's most significant natural, cultural, and recreational resources. Both types of trails are planned and administered under the authorities of the National Trails System Act (NTSA, 16 U.S.C. 1241-1251) and serve as the backbone of the National Trails System.

S. 2708 would grant unique authorities to a single Designated Operational Partner, which could limit the Secretary's authority and diminish opportunities for other cooperative management partners. This exclusivity could conflict with existing agreements or other opportunities to enter into agreements to achieve local trail objectives. In addition, it is unclear what unintended consequences may arise for federal land managing agencies, Tribes, state and local governments, private landowners, or others with land management jurisdiction for trail management and

operations if a Secretary identifies a single, trail-wide operational partnering organization. We also have significant concerns with the provisions in the bill addressing investigation and enforcement of alleged violations of Federal property rights violations and delegating Federal land acquisition prioritization to Designated Operational Partners.

The Department values the role that our numerous non-profit and other partners play in helping to build and maintain the National Trails System and shares the goal of enhancing public-private partnerships. However, for the reasons discussed above, we do not support S. 2708. We would be happy to discuss our concerns further with the bill sponsor and the Subcommittee.

S. 2970, to authorize the use of off-highway vehicles in certain areas of the Capitol Reef National Park, Utah

This legislation would require the National Park Service (NPS) to allow street legal OHVs on the portions of Burr Trail Road, Cathedral Road, Hartnet Road, Highway 24, Notom Bullfrog Road, Polk Creek Road, Oil Ranch Road, and Baker Ranch Road that are located within the boundaries of Capitol Reef National Park (Capitol Reef). In addition, it mandates use of the State's definition of an OHV.

The Department supports the goals of the legislation to enhance and improve recreational opportunities at Capitol Reef and would welcome the opportunity to work with the Subcommittee on technical amendments. The park reviews its OHV use policy annually, and the NPS is ready to provide input on the areas of Capitol Reef that are most suitable for OHV use, considering impacts to visitor safety, park resources, and visitor experiences.

Capitol Reef, located in south-central Utah, is known for its stunning scenery, geology, and history. Visitors to the park enjoy a variety of recreational opportunities and cultural and historical experiences, including viewing vast redrock cliffs and petroglyphs, hiking, backcountry camping, scenic driving, and picking fruit in historic pioneer orchards.

This legislation also applies the State definition of an OHV to use in Capitol Reef National Park. At present, an OHV is defined by Utah Criminal and Traffic Code, Section 41-22-2, as All-terrain type I and All-terrain type II vehicles. This definition includes any vehicle currently registered as a street-legal all-terrain vehicle (ATV) or utility terrain vehicle (UTV), or is eligible for a state ATV/UTV registration sticker. We would welcome the opportunity to work with the Subcommittee on amendments that would enable the NPS to respond to changes in motor vehicle technology or use trends and patterns.

Chairman Daines, that concludes my testimony. I would be pleased to answer any questions from members of the committee.

Senator DAINES. Mr. Caldwell, thank you.

My first question is regarding Senate bill 290, the Making National Parks Safer Act. The beauty and the attraction of many of our national parks is the ability to get away from the world, hiking beautiful trails, which both the Co-Chair and myself have done in our national parks, fishing in streams, far removed from highways and city lights. However, that also means that when an emergency happens, it is difficult, if not impossible to contact emergency services. Senate bill 290 requires the Park Service to develop a plan to install next-generation 9-1-1 systems in consultation with state and local officials.

My question is, how can this bill and next-generation technology, like the cell and satellite service that T-Mobile recently deployed in Montana, how can that be used to increase emergency services while also protecting the natural beauty and the "getting away from it all" experience we seek when going to our parks?

Mr. CALDWELL. Sure, thank you, Senator.

The bill would improve safety by upgrading our communications technology, as you have identified, that we rely on during emergencies with better location data and better situational awareness as to where folks are enjoying their parks. These improvements are largely invisible to visitors, so they strengthen the emergency response without deterring the park's natural beauty or history. Additionally, it may lead to improved responsiveness and reports of potential resource damage.

Senator DAINES. Thanks, Mr. Caldwell.

As I discussed in my opening statement, Senate bill 1858 requires the Park Service to keep the 14 national cemeteries you administer open during federal holidays. This has been a persistent issue in Montana, where the Custer National Cemetery has been closed on important remembrance days like Christmas and Memorial Day itself. My question is, do you agree that national cemeteries should remain open so family and friends of service members can visit their loved ones, and allow for patriotic activities, such as Wreaths Across America, to honor fallen service members and warriors on important holidays?

Mr. CALDWELL. Yes, Senator, thank you for the question. You know, we are proud stewards of 14 national cemeteries across the system, as you pointed out, and our National Park Service cemetery standards require that these sites be maintained in a solemn, tranquil, and dignified way as places of remembrance, with access and general maintenance practices designed to support visitation throughout the year, including holidays. And while staffing and site-specific operations may vary, our policy and practices are to keep these sacred places open so families can pay their respects whenever it is most convenient to them.

Senator DAINES. Thank you.

Senate bill 416, this directs the Park Service to expand the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historic Park in Vermont to include the King Farm. Senator King, we aren't enacting your dream of living in a national park in this bill, are we?

Senator KING. Alas, no relation.

Senator DAINES. Okay, good. Let the record show there is no relationship between the Senator and the King in this bill.

You may be wondering why a Senator from Montana is asking a question on a park in Vermont, however, Fredrick Billings, who this park honors, is actually the namesake of Billings, Montana, the largest city in Montana. While Mr. Billings never lived in Montana, his work on the Northern Pacific Railroad and his investments in Montana helped grow the town that would become the county seat—Billings, Montana—of Yellowstone County. Mr. Billings was also an avid conservationist and played a role in the conservation of Yellowstone National Park.

My question is, how does the inclusion of King Farm affect the mission of this park and help tell the story of America's prominent businessman and conservationist?

Mr. CALDWELL. Thank you for the question, Senator.

While I am certainly not prepared to answer specifics on the Marsh-Billings expansion bill, I do know that the Department's position is generally to take care of the existing portfolio in our National Park System with the existing resources that we have at hand. Having been to Marsh-Billings, having seen the King Farm, I can certainly see why you are proud of the story that's represented there. But at this point, I am happy to get back to you and the Committee when it comes to the specifics of that legislation.

Senator DAINES. Thank you. It's also a towering moment. My dad grew up and literally married the girl next door in Billings, Montana.

Last question, Mr. Caldwell. It's my understanding that Senate bill 1377, the Theodore Roosevelt National Park Wild Horses Protection Act, requires the Park Service to maintain a genetically diverse herd of wild horses in the Theodore Roosevelt National Park. Under the bill, the population of the horses should be no fewer than 150. I know how hard species management can be. In Montana, we deal with it a lot, from the bison managed in our parks, to grizzlies and wolves outside our parks, that should be managed by our state. These issues can have strong opinions. It's important that you work with local stakeholders and our governors before making major decisions.

My question: could you tell me how this bill helps give the Park Service tools to manage wild horses, and what you have already done to manage them in the park?

Mr. CALDWELL. Sure, thank you, Senator.

S. 1377 helps us by providing explicit congressional guidance to maintain a healthy, genetically diverse population while ensuring that horse management remains fully consistent with protecting the park's natural resources. It requires us to develop a cost-effective management plan, establish objective population and genetic benchmarks, and formalize the monitoring and reporting that we have already conducted. It provides clearer congressional parameters and greater predictability for both the park and the public. Thank you.

Senator DAINES. Mr. Caldwell, thank you.

I will turn now to Co-Chair King.

Senator KING. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Caldwell, you heard me describe my concern about the elimination of historical references throughout the park system, for ex-

ample, the photograph at the Fort Pulaski National Monument and many other examples. Where are these decisions being made? Who is making the decisions? Are they being made at the park level? Are they being made here in Washington? Who, specifically, says get rid of that photograph in Florida or the slavery reference at Harpers Ferry? I would like to know where in the Department that decision is being made and by whom.

Mr. CALDWELL. Yes, I appreciate your question, Senator.

I don't have that information, nor have I been part of that decision-making, but I am happy to follow-up with your office and the Committee.

Senator KING. I would appreciate it if you would take that question for the record and give us a written response from the Department.

Mr. CALDWELL. Yes, sir.

Senator KING. Because it just worries me that there is—these are significant decisions, and there should be some transparency in terms of how they are being made, who is making them, what the criteria is, whether it's being made at the local level, all of those kinds of things, so please supply that for the record.

As you know, I also have concerns about staffing. How were the decisions made? We have a hiring freeze. We fired probationary employees. We had people take the early fork in the road. Has there been any analysis on a park-by-park basis or on the overall system of a staffing target? And I am looking for data. I am looking for support for a decision that, frankly, looks rather arbitrary.

Mr. CALDWELL. Sure. Senator, I appreciate that question.

I don't have the details in terms of FTE number.

Senator KING. Well, my question is, are there details? That's what I am looking for.

Mr. CALDWELL. I will relay that question to the Department to provide you with those responses.

I think, as across the National Park System, certainly, your interaction with superintendents across the country, we rely on their expertise to meet the challenges, and I think we are confident that the National Park Service will continue to deliver the mission it's responsible to deliver to the American people.

Senator KING. It's hard for me to believe that when you reduce the staff by a third from an already diminished level, that you are going to be able to deliver the same level of service. That's a nice idea, but this isn't—meeting with park visitors isn't something that you can just conjure out of thin air. So, what I am after is, was there any analysis done of a staffing target? If so, how was that target established? What is the data background? What kind of research was done? So, that's what I am looking for.

Similarly, the same thing on the budget. Giving us a six-page budget, one of which is blank, as opposed to 600 pages, doesn't give us anything to work with. And I guess my question is, are we going to get a serious budget document before the appropriations process is complete for 2027?

Mr. CALDWELL. I am unaware of the schedule of the budget delivery, but I will certainly relay that question as well.

Senator KING. Well, again, it's—we want to be partners here. We are all on the same team. We are all trying to serve the public as

effectively as we can. But we can't do our job unless you do your job. I don't mean you—but the Department, in terms of serious analysis, numbers, background, targets, effects, impacts—has any research been done about the impact will be of a certain reduction at a particular park? So, I am looking for a lot more data and support for these decisions. And in terms of these decisions about—I would only call it whitewashing our history—I would like to know who is making those decisions. So, I appreciate that.

Thank you, Mr. Caldwell.

Senator DAINES. Co-Chair King, thank you.

Senator Hoeven, my condolences. It was a tough day in Fargo on Saturday.

Senator HOEVEN. Yeah, understatement there. I was looking forward to a Bison-Bobcat rematch.

Senator DAINES. We were looking forward to it as well.

Senator HOEVEN. Thank you.

Senator DAINES. We could have a brief moment of silence, if you would like.

Senator HOEVEN. Yeah, I have had a few between then and now.

Senator DAINES. I'm sure you have.

Senator HOEVEN. At this point, I am just going to wish the Bobcats the very best.

Senator DAINES. Well, you are very gracious. For a team that never loses, it's tough. I know.

Senator HOEVEN. It's really tough, yes.

Senator DAINES. All right, Senator Hoeven.

Senator HOEVEN. All right, thanks to both of you, both to the Chairman and to the Ranking Member for holding this hearing today. I really appreciate it.

And of course, Director Caldwell, thank you for being here, I appreciate that very much as well.

I am pleased that the Subcommittee is considering a number of bills today, including S. 1377, the Theodore Roosevelt National Park Wild Horses Protection Act. Horses have long been a living, breathing part of the Theodore Roosevelt National Park in North Dakota, and they are key to the visitor experience. Their presence dates to the early ranching era of the Badlands, long before the park was formally established. Today, the horses maintain the historic scene that reflects what Theodore Roosevelt himself would have seen during his time in the Badlands and the Dakota Territory. And these were very formative years that shaped the character and conservation ethic of our nation's 26th President. Unfortunately, there have been multiple attempts over the years, including as recently as 2022, to remove horses from the park. Each one has been met with overwhelming—and I mean overwhelming—opposition from the public. And that's why we worked to craft a balanced, durable solution that provides permanent protection for horses in the Park.

Under our bill, the National Park Service is required to maintain a healthy herd of not fewer than 150 horses, as our Chairman referenced, which I appreciate very much, aligned with the population levels needed for long-term genetic viability. This approach reflects the broad support among those who value the heritage of the park and the herd's ties to the legacy of Theodore Roosevelt. My col-

league from Virginia, Senator Kaine, joined me in introducing this legislation. It's bipartisan legislation. Senator Kaine knows the importance of wild ponies. For example, in—hopefully I will get these names close to right—Chincoteague and Assateague Islands, and you can correct me, you know, when you get a chance—

Mr. CALDWELL. I will not correct you, Senator. You did very well.

Senator HOEVEN [continuing]. On federal lands in his home state, and I appreciate his willingness to partner with us on this bipartisan effort.

I appreciate Interior's support of the bill and look forward to working with my colleagues to advance it.

So, while we appreciate the National Park Service's most recent commitment to maintain horses at Theodore Roosevelt National Park, my legislation aims to resolve any uncertainty by directing the Park Service to maintain a sustainable and genetically viable herd at the park on a permanent basis. So, my first question is, do you agree that this bill will help ensure the horses at Theodore Roosevelt National Park are protected going forward?

Mr. CALDWELL. Yes, the Department agrees with that, sir.

Senator HOEVEN. Okay, good.

Secondly, does establishing, in statute, a requirement for a healthy, sustainable herd give the clear direction necessary to manage the horses for the long term?

Mr. CALDWELL. Yes, the Department's support of this—one of the primary reasons is that specific congressional direction. So, thank you.

Senator HOEVEN. Good. Thank you again for the support. Thank you for being here, and also thanks to Regional Director Bert Frost, who was recently out there with me. I worked with him on elk issues, and we got to a tremendous solution that has been—that was during my Governor days—but for more than a decade, it has served the park well, it has served our state well, served the country well. And so, I really appreciate his willingness to understand the importance of these issues and work with us on them.

Thanks to you as well.

Mr. CALDWELL. I will pass your compliments on. Thank you.

Senator HOEVEN. Thanks to you as well, Director.

Mr. CALDWELL. Thank you.

Senator HOEVEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator DAINES. Senator Hoeven, thank you.

Senator Murkowski.

Senator MURKOWSKI. Thank you, and I want to thank the Co-Chairs this morning for the hearing and for including a couple of my bills on the calendar for today. One of them is S. 1353, to extend the authority for modifications to the Second Division Memorial here in Washington, DC, and the other one is S. 573, to designate Denali as Denali.

First, on S. 1353, I am very pleased to see the Park Service offer supportive testimony for this. This is, really, an extremely simple bill. It relates to the Second Division Memorial. I thank you for working with us to help shape and refine the legislation. What we do here is extend the authorization to modify the Second Division Memorial included in the NDAA back in 2018. For a whole host of different reasons, things got delayed—COVID—but the seven-year

initial period allowed by the Commemorative Works Act just wasn't enough time. So, we provided the standard extension for the bill. The modifications come at zero cost to the taxpayers, but it effectively honors those who have given their life in recent conflicts, such as Afghanistan and Iraq. I was in Anchorage just last week and I met with the Chair of the Second Division Memorial's Foundation, Aves Thompson. Aves has been working on this initiative for a decade-plus now that would install this very simple bench on this memorial. I have a couple letters of support to add to the record for the hearing, including Mr. Thompson's statement. I would ask unanimous consent that they be added at the appropriate place.

Senator DAINES. So approved.

[Letters of support for S. 1353 follow:]

The 2nd Division Memorial Modification Project
The Second Indianhead Division Memorial Foundation 501(C)(3) EIN 47-2434277

Members
Energy and Natural Resources Committee
United State Senate

*re: S-1353, EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY FOR MODIFICATIONS TO SECOND DIVISION
MEMORIAL*

Dear ENR Members,

The 2nd Infantry Division Memorial, established in 1936 and located on the Mall at 17th and Constitution, NW, Washington, DC, honors the fallen warriors of the US Army's 2nd Infantry Division from World War I. After the Korean War, the Memorial was updated to include those who lost their lives during World War II and those who served in Korea.

Section 352 of the NDAA 2018 authorized the 2nd Indianhead Division Memorial Foundation to modify the Memorial. This authorization expired in December 2024. **We are requesting a no-cost extension of seven years to complete the modifications** and raise the funds to do so. This extension will ensure that we honor the American and Korean soldiers of the 2nd Infantry Division who sacrificed their lives in the defense of freedom during the armistice period and the lesser-known DMZ War from the late 1960s to 1991. Modifications will include acknowledgement of 2ID Fallen Warriors in Afghanistan and Iraq.

We ask that you and your colleagues support S-1353, extending the 2ID Memorials Foundation's authorization.

Respectfully,

Joe Marcil, President
2IDA President
262 488-0537
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Second Indianhead Division Association, Inc.
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December 8, 2025

Members
 Energy and Natural Resources Committee
 United State Senate

re: S-1353, EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY FOR MODIFICATIONS TO SECOND DIVISION MEMORIAL

Dear ENR Members,

The 2nd Infantry Division Memorial, established in 1936 and located on the Mall at 17th and Constitution, NW, Washington, DC, honors the fallen warriors of the US Army's 2nd Infantry Division from World War I. After the Korean War, the Memorial was updated to include those who lost their lives during World War II and those who served in Korea.

Section 352 of the NDAA 2018 authorized the 2nd Indianhead Division Memorial Foundation to modify the Memorial. This authorization expired in December 2024. **We are requesting a no-cost extension of seven years to complete the modifications** and raise the funds to do so. This extension will ensure that we honor the American and Korean soldiers of the 2nd Infantry Division who sacrificed their lives in the defense of freedom during the armistice period and the lesser-known DMZ War from the late 1960s to 1991. Modifications will include acknowledgement of 2ID Fallen Warriors in Afghanistan and Iraq. We ask that you and your colleagues support S-1353, extending the 2ID Memorials Foundation's authorization.

Respectfully,

Second To None!

Benedetto (Ben) Tiseo
 Past President 2023-2025
 2nd Indianhead Division Association, Inc.
 Email: ben@tiseo.com
 Phone: 248-888-1300 (EST)

The 2nd Division Memorial Modification Project
The Second Indianhead Division Memorial Foundation 501(C)(3) EIN 47-2434277

Members
Energy and Natural Resources Committee
United State Senate

*re: S-1353, EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY FOR MODIFICATIONS TO SECOND DIVISION
MEMORIAL*

Dear ENR Members,

The 2nd Infantry Division Memorial, established in 1936 and located on the Mall at 17th and Constitution, NW, Washington, DC, honors the fallen warriors of the US Army's 2nd Infantry Division from World War I. After the Korean War, the Memorial was updated to include those who lost their lives during World War II and those who served in Korea. Section 352 of the NDAA 2018 authorized the 2nd Indianhead Division Memorial Foundation to modify the Memorial. This authorization expired in December 2024. **We are requesting a no-cost extension of seven years to complete the modifications** and raise the funds to do so. This extension will ensure that we honor the American and Korean soldiers of the 2nd Infantry Division who sacrificed their lives in the defense of freedom during the armistice period and the lesser-known DMZ War from the late 1960s to 1991. Modifications will include acknowledgement of 2ID Fallen Warriors in Afghanistan and Iraq.

We ask that you and your colleagues support S-1353, extending the 2ID Memorials Foundation's authorization.

Respectfully,

Aves D. Thompson, Chair
2ID Memorials Foundation
907 240-0114
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Senator MURKOWSKI. On the second measure, this is something that Alaskans feel very, very strongly about, and that is the name of North America's tallest peak and a mountain that we look to, really, with almost reverence. When I fly into Ted Stevens International Airport in Anchorage there, before we even get close to looking to landing, people are looking out the window to see if they are going to catch a glimpse of Denali today. When the mountain is out, we talk about it. We talk about it in a way that, people say, "have you have seen the mountain today? Have you seen the Great One today?" Well, my friends, Denali translates as the "Great One." What more fitting name for such an incredible peak.

On the first day of his second term, President Trump issued an Executive Order titled "Restoring Names that Honor American Greatness." And that order included the renaming of North America's tallest peak from its traditional Koyukon Athabascan name of Denali to Mount McKinley. And again, as I say, we have called this mountain "Denali" in Alaska for decades, generations. The Koyukon Athabascan have referred to it as Denali for millennia. We are trying to trace exactly how far back it goes. The dialects may be different, but effectively, it keeps coming back to what do we name the Great One, and Denali and Koyukon Athabascan is just that.

To me, this is about respecting the original stewards of the land who gave this fitting name. Now, I am not surprised by the testimony that we have received from the Department today, but I would encourage the administration to reexamine the position on the bill. The multi-decade effort to name this mountain Denali, rightfully, is a bipartisan issue in the state. Going back to 1975, our state government first petitioned the Federal Government to align with the state's designation of Denali. So, this is something that has been going on, again, for decades here. And this is nothing to denigrate President McKinley and his reputation and the contributions that he has provided to this country. He is absolutely worthy of recognition. But it's often pointed out that he was never to the State of Alaska, whether as President or even as an individual.

So, as we think about ways to show tribute to his important legacy, I think it's important to note that by restoring Denali to its rightful name, the McKinley legacy is not erased or diminished in any way. It lives on through numerous, numerous sites and tributes. You have the McKinley National Memorial, the National McKinley Birthplace Memorial, the McKinley Presidential Library and Museum. You have statues in Ohio, Hawaii, and Illinois, among others. So, this is nothing against our former President and the contributions that he has made. It truly is focused on recognizing the original stewards of the land and the designation that they have given it.

I have just one quick question for Mr. Caldwell today. Within the Secretarial Order that came out, it directs the Board of Geographic Names to reverse Denali's name, as I mentioned, but it also requires, and I am reading directly here, "appropriate DOI officials to work with Alaska Native entities and state and local organizations to pursue adopting names for landmarks to honor the history and culture of the Alaskan people." So, that was included as part

of the Secretarial Order. And you know, looking past the fact that the Denali renaming is contrary to the direction to honor the history and culture of Alaskan people, can you give me any update as to how this aspect of the order is being carried out in Alaska? Who in the Department may be engaged in this objective?

Mr. CALDWELL. Thank you, Senator, for your question. I don't have that information today, but I will relay your question and we will get back to you on that.

Senator MURKOWSKI. I would appreciate that.

Mr. CALDWELL. Thank you.

Senator MURKOWSKI. I have been asked by others and I haven't had the answer for them. So, if you can help us out with that, I would appreciate that.

Mr. CALDWELL. Will do.

Senator MURKOWSKI. Mr. Chairman and Mr. Co-Chairman, thank you for making sure that these important measures are on the docket as well as so many others that are before the Committee right now. I appreciate it.

Senator DAINES. Senator Murkowski, thank you.

If there are no more questions for today, members may also submit follow-up written questions for the record before 6:00 p.m. tomorrow. The hearing record will be open for one week.

I want to thank Mr. Caldwell for his time and his testimony today.

This hearing is now adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:04 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

APPENDIX MATERIAL SUBMITTED

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
December 9, 2025 Hearing: *NP Subcommittee Hearing to Receive Testimony on Pending Legislation.*

Questions for the Record submitted to Mike Caldwell, Associate Director, Park Planning, Facilities, and Lands, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior

[No response was received at the time of publication.]

Questions for the Record from Chairman Lee

Question 1: Mr. Caldwell, as the Associate Director of Park Planning, Facilities, and Lands for the National Park Service, you have unique ability to preserve and promote access to the most significant features of our nation's parks.

Can you elaborate on the consideration of significant features of public interest within national parks when planning sufficient road access and visitor infrastructure?

Question 2: In 2008, Utah authorized off-highway vehicles on certain classes of roads, reflecting the state's assessment that these vehicles can be operated safely on those routes. Despite the National Park Service's earlier deference to state motor vehicle law within system units, off-highway vehicles were soon after prohibited on all roads within Capitol Reef National Park, limiting access to major features that visitors can reach only with 4x4 high clearance vehicles due to the rugged terrain of the road surface. My bill, S. 2970, would allow recreational vehicles built for rough terrain to operate only on specific park roads, improving public access to the very places the park was established to showcase, and honoring local feedback on safe usage of these specific roads.

How important is it to honor local expertise when making park planning decisions? In your experience, what challenges ensue when park superintendents dismiss local concerns?

Question 3: National Park System regulations promulgated in 1987 provided that "traffic and the use of vehicles within a park area are governed by State law." The Service later altered their position. Motor vehicle use in system units is now governed by a mix of federal regulations and park-specific rules.

What challenges does the National Park Service encounter when system unit motor vehicle law differs from the motor vehicle law of the state in which it is located?

Questions for the Record from Senator King

Question 1: Pursuant to SO 3431, Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History, the National Park Service has begun modifying, or removing interpretive resources and historical information that depict American history in a negative light, from units of the National Park System. Who is making these decisions? Is it individual park unit staff, political appointees in Washington, D.C., or other NPS staff?

Question 2: Pursuant to SO 3431, are these reviews and removals of interpretive resources and historical information conducted in consultation with professionals in history and science?

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
December 9, 2025 Hearing: NP Subcommittee Hearing to Receive Testimony on Pending Legislation.

Question 3: The National Park Service has implemented several policies to reduce staffing levels including hiring freezes, termination of probationary employees, and the issuance of deferred resignation and early retirement offers. Does the NPS have a defined staffing target, in terms of full-time equivalent positions? And if so, what is that target staffing level?

Question 4: Has the National Park Service undertaken any sort of study or review to analyze the impact of these hiring policies on individual park operations, and will that information be shared with this Committee?

Question 5: What is the current NPS-wide staffing level in full-time equivalent terms, and how does it compare to NPS-wide staffing levels at the end of calendar year 2024?

Question 6: Does the Department of the Interior intend to provide a full, detailed budget justification and performance information document to Congress for Fiscal Year 2026 (commonly referred to as a green book), and if so, when should Congress expect to receive that document?

Question 7: The Park Service recently announced that additional entry fee of \$100 for non-US residents at 11 of the most-visited national parks. Is the \$100 fee per car, or per person?

Question 8: How will individual park unites determine which fee a visitor is required to pay?

Question 9: Has the NPS conducted a study to determine the impact that these fees will have on visitation levels, and if so, when will the NPS share that information with this Committee?

JACKY ROSEN
NEVADA

United States Senate

COMMITTEES
ARMED SERVICES
COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION
FOREIGN RELATIONS
SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Dear Chair Daines and Ranking Member King:

Thank you for holding this hearing today and considering S.332, the Holocaust Education and Antisemitism Lessons (HEAL) Act. Today's hearing is an important step towards improving Holocaust education and ultimately countering rising antisemitism here in the United States.

As our nation continues to grapple with an alarming rise in antisemitism, and with Holocaust denial and distortion spiking worldwide, it's critical that we identify and improve the resources available to our nation's educators so they can accurately inform students about the horrors of the Holocaust and the dangers of anti-Jewish bigotry. The horrific attacks in Washington, DC and Colorado this year remind us of what can happen when antisemitism is normalized. We have an obligation to do all we can to combat this hate, and I firmly believe that work begins in the classroom.

My bipartisan HEAL Act would direct the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum to conduct a first-of-its-kind, comprehensive study on Holocaust education in the United States. This study would help identify the resources and methods available to public schools to improve the ways in which educators teach students across the country about the Holocaust and antisemitism. This legislation aims to ensure the lessons of one of humanities' darkest chapters in history are never forgotten.

The bill before your committee today could not have been drafted without the assistance of my co-lead, Senator James Lankford, and our House partners, Representatives Young Kim and Josh Gottheimer. I'd also like to thank the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, whose guidance and support of this critical legislation have been indispensable. Lastly, I'd like to thank the Anti-Defamation League and others who have provided statements in support of this important legislation, in addition to groups that have endorsed the legislation, such as the American Jewish Committee, Jewish Federations of North America, and Hadassah.

Thank you to Chair Daines and Ranking Member King and the entire Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee for holding this subcommittee hearing. I ask my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to support this legislation when it comes before the committee for consideration and in the future as it moves forward in the Senate.

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JACKY ROSEN
NEVADA

United States Senate

Sincerely,



Senator Jacky Rosen

COMMITTEES
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December 9, 2025

Testimony of Brendan Mysliwiec,
Director of Federal Policy of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy
S. 2708, the Appalachian Trail Centennial Act

Chairman Daines and Ranking Member King

The Appalachian National Scenic Trail (ANST, A.T., or Trail) looms large in our national consciousness. Despite its prominence, the reality of how it is run gains very little attention. “Cooperative management” is at the core of the A.T.’s success and, when asked how our centennial may be used to benefit the A.T., we determined that strengthening cooperative management would set us up for another 100 years of success. In S. 2708, Senators Kaine and Tillis seek to recognize the importance of non-governmental contributions of ATC and the “A.T. Clubs” to the A.T., set a National Trails System (NTS)-wide standard for National Scenic and National Historic Trails (NSHTs), and spur further development of these dynamic conservation units. ATC is grateful for the attention that Senators Kaine and Tillis are devoting to this topic and hope other Senators will join in the effort to strengthen the partnership nature of NSHTs.

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) is the sole non-governmental entity working across the entirety of the ANST, a unit of the National Park System (System). ATC was founded in 1925 to facilitate the development of the Appalachian Trail to establish the first NGO partnership park in the federal government.¹ There are now 30 additional NSHTs.² We played an important role in the development of the National Trails System Act (NTSA), the organic act for all NSHTs, as well as spearheaded amendments to that Act, further strengthening it. The ANST is governed by the Cooperative Management System (CMS),³ which partners federal and state agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and individual volunteers to collaboratively develop and steward the conserved areas adjacent to this nearly 2,200-mile footpath surrounded by 385,000 acres of land.⁴ In the CMS, the lion’s share of the on-the-ground, day-to-day work on the Trail is performed by volunteers organized through the 30 independent NGOs serving on discrete sections of Trail.⁵ The CMS and ANST are shining examples of civic engagement and proof that with care and attention, audacious ideas can be made real.

¹ *National Park System: Units Managed Through Partnerships*, CRS Report R42125, p. 7. April 5, 2016. A review of the partnership parks surveyed by this report reflects the ANST is the first NGO partnership park in the System.

² The Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail, administered by the USDA Forest Service, was established alongside the ANST in the original 1968 Act. This brings the total number of NSHTs to 32.

³ This is a generally accepted term describing the network of partnerships that enable NSHTs to operate, although the term “Cooperative Management System” is not used on every NSHT.

⁴ The ATC continues to work with the NPS and USFS to determine the gross acreage of the ANST and the exact acreage under the responsibility of the given land managers/owners. The most official estimate of NPS, USFS, state, and private lands has the Trail at around 385,000 acres.

⁵ The A.T. Clubs are very diverse, both in terms of focus of services (the Appalachian Mountain Club is the oldest conservation and outdoor recreation organization in the country, offering numerous services and working on national and state policy topics and the Batona Hiking Club is focused on hiking and trail maintenance in northeastern

The attention that the A.T. has garnered and sustained over the 104 years since Benton MacKaye's article⁶ was published is nothing short of incredible. The NTSA set out a complex but necessary approach to establishing and effectuating NSHTs, one that is often inaccessible to those who are not involved with them on a daily basis. At its core, the ATCA seeks to promote the successes and the strengths of cooperative management partnerships by stating the nature of the highest achieving to-date NTS partnership: that of the ANST.⁷ This legislation will address inconsistencies in the treatment of NSHTs and the partnerships that enable them without requiring the adoption of one model of cooperative management over another, as well as provide direction to the agencies to include NSHTs in their evaluations of conservation impact, such as through visitor economic impact analyses.⁸ It also includes the first statutory reference to the A.T. Clubs.⁹ For the many who have poured their blood, sweat, and tears into providing an unparalleled recreational experience to the world, the ATCA will be a validation of their effort.

Definitions and Roles

Many people believe that the ANST is merely a "simple footpath." It is not. It is a large landscape conservation effort designed to connect the people and places of the Appalachian Mountain range and to protect the natural, scenic, cultural, and historic values of that physiographic region to provide for "maximum recreational potential."¹⁰ The footpath, or treadway, of the ANST is the way in which any single individual can access these values, something some estimated 4 million people do every year.¹¹ It is this quirk of the NTSA from which much confusion about NSHTs arises: that is, the Act does not protect treadways; rather, it establishes continually developing federal public lands¹² organized around treadways. The second quirk of the NTSA is that volunteers and volunteer organizations are empowered to do—and do, in fact do—much of the work that, on other federal lands, is done by federal employees, based on the operation of the Appalachian Trail prior to its gaining National Scenic Trail status.¹³

Pennsylvania) and in terms of acreage (the Randolph Mountain Club operates the shortest section, five miles, of the A.T. and the Maine Appalachian Trail Club operates the longest section, 267 miles, of the A.T.).

⁶ MacKaye, Benton. *An Appalachian Trail: A Project in Regional Planning*. *Journal of the American Institute of Architects* 9 (1921): 325-30.

⁷ This partnership is so high-achieving, in part, because of the instruction Congress has given the Executive branch, something no other trail has gotten, but would get with the ATCA.

⁸ Currently, the federal land management agencies do not measure the visitor economic impact of those visiting the NSHTs.

⁹ The "three-legged stool" of the A.T. is the land managers, ATC, and the A.T. Clubs. Each of us play a role without which, the A.T. as a cohesive entity would not exist.

¹⁰ 16 U.S.C. 1242(a)

¹¹ This number is the ATC's best estimate, given a 2007 visitation estimate performed by the USFS and tracking with modern visitation trends. The NPS and the ATC are currently collaborating on a visitation estimate relying on anonymized "big data."

¹² Although we generally refer to NSHTs as public "lands," they are in fact lands and waters, and rivers, lakes, and shores are features of many NSHTs. The Captain John Smith National Historic Trail (NHT), for example, is entirely water-based.

¹³ 16 U.S.C. 1246(h) lays out allowable roles for non-federal entities in federally administered areas of a NSHT, empowering them to "operate, develop, and maintain any portion of such a trail either within or outside a federally administered area," although the NTSA does not define these terms, as the ATCA would. 16 U.S.C. 1250 includes additional allowable roles for "volunteers" and "volunteer organizations," which the NTSA do not define, but the ATCA would.

The National Trails System Act of 1968, as amended, has protected the ability of individuals and NGOs to serve in essential roles. We say “protected” because the work that we and our NGO partners perform on our respective trails often predates the inclusion of those trails in the NTSA (or its enactment, in the case of the ATC and the Pacific Crest Trail Association). In fact, more or less down the line of the 32 NSHTs in existence today, there is one (or two) primary NGO partner(s) who labor extensively on a given (sometimes more than one) trail, whether beginning from ideating the trail themselves or having joined the trail project following designation.¹⁴

These Congressionally protected roles are exceedingly uncommon in the federal land management agencies and can cause consternation for those who are unfamiliar with the practices of NSHTs, whether they be new hires to federal unit offices or an individual responsible for processing grants and agreements.¹⁵ Because NSHTs are so few, as are the staff members who rotate through them, and operate so differently than conventional federal public land units, continual and recurring education is required despite the 57 years of ANST cooperative management under the NTSA. The ATCA’s adoption of clear definitions will decrease confusion and increase the volunteer- and partnership-centric operation of NSHTs.

The NTSA implies, but does not declare, that three general aspects of “land management”—as we understand them—are disaggregated on NSHTs. On the ANST, overall “trail administration” belongs to the NPS (consulting with the USFS),¹⁶ “land management” can reside with the NPS, USFS, state, or private entity (as “land owner”), and “operation,”¹⁷ generally lives in ATC and the A.T. Clubs.¹⁸ Therefore, much of the day-to-day work in the ANST and NSHTs are performed by volunteers and NGO staff. This is because the Trail was designed by volunteers and NGO partners, with the footpath predating the park unit’s establishment by 40 years. The NPS park office was created to integrate the pre-existing network of partnerships into the federal public land management apparatus, not exclusively to “manage” the ANST in the conventional NPS sense.¹⁹ Our management model, enabled by the NTSA, is premised on “non-delegability,”

¹⁴ Some NSHTs have more than one organization operating at the same level of engagement, but serving different regions or responsibilities of a given NSHT. The New England National Scenic Trail and the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail are two examples.

¹⁵ While orienting new staff members to a given NSHT “unit” office can be complicated enough, it is the orientation of those federal employees who are not specifically staffed to a “unit” where one can see the steepest learning curve. NSHT unit offices are generally more static than those of the park units they intersect, those of Great Smoky Mountains and Shenandoah National Parks, for instance, or those working in the regional offices. Unlike NSHT unit staffers, staffers in other parts of the federal land management agencies may have little to no interaction with cooperative management outside of a discrete task, but may still require a full crash course in the legal and practical differences of the NSHTs from conventional federal land units.

¹⁶ See 16 USC 1244(a)(1).

¹⁷ What we refer to as “operation” in this letter has often been described as “local NGO management,” a term which has caused some confusion because of the association of “land management” with final decision-making under many federal land use laws. Under the NTSA, the NPS is statutorily identified as the “trail administrator,” or final decision maker for the ANST on most topics, but is expressly *not* the land manager for large stretches of the Trail; the USDA Forest Service is statutorily the consulting administrator, as well as the land manager for approximately 47% of the Trail. Delineating between administration of the cooperative enterprise, management of the lands, and operation of the treadway and conserved corridor is just one example of how NSHTs are complex.

¹⁸ This disaggregation is complex, and not explicitly stated itself in the NTSA. It can be inferred however, by the reference to “administration” as being only to federal entities and “management” and “operation” as allowable for non-federal entities. The ATCA would cement these distinctions for the benefit of all.

¹⁹ Generally speaking, “federal land management” refers to the exclusive and final decision-making authority of the agency assigned the responsibility by Congress for a given area. Because the ANST and PCNST were in part located on areas that had already been conserved by Congress, a distinction between “administration” and management”

meaning that any inherently governmental activity²⁰ must be performed by the government and everything else can be (and on the ANST is) generally done by NGO partners.

This disaggregation is, in some sense, radical, but it is the only way that the ANST or any other long trail could ever be successful. By separating out these roles, the NTSA protected the volunteer and volunteer organization roles on NSHTs but it also protected the legal structure of lands Congress had already conserved in 1968. The APPA (ANST park office) Superintendent administers the ANST, but does not manage all the land that constitutes the ANST—this would give an NPS official final decision-making authority over portions of the Cherokee National Forest, Sky Meadows State Park, and the Cherry Valley National Wildlife Refuge, for example—and the NPS has never truly operated the ANST, as from the moment of designation, the ATC and the Clubs continued to perform most of the day-to-day work on the Trail, a model replicated to varying degrees across other NSHTs, with particularly operational reliance on NGOs existing across the National Scenic Trails.

Recognizing the Roles of Organizations like the ATC

There is no ANST without ATC and the A.T. Clubs. The statutory versatility of the NTSA, while still a novel innovation to many, is an unequivocal necessity. The formalization of the system began on the A.T. 47 years prior to President Johnson's signing of that Act²¹ and even before the first formal agreement with the NPS and USFS during President Franklin Roosevelt's administration.²² The flexibility of the Act, as well as its safeguarding of prior congressionally-established conserved lands, was enhanced with the amendments signed into law by President Carter²³ and President Reagan.²⁴ In a sense, as the trailblazer of the partnership model, the NSHTs have not benefitted from the shift in culture that has produced other legislated partnerships, wherein Congress explicitly names the non-governmental partners.²⁵ The ATCA facilitates the recognition or organizations like us by creating Designated Operational Partners while not compromising the NTSA's versatility; rather, it reflects practically how it is implemented across many trails.

Although the NTSA was written (and amended) to continue to allow the ATC to do what it began in 1925 and to empower other organizations to do the same, the NTSA does not make explicit that the role we and similar organizations play is to be expected. By collecting the NTSA-

was necessary because, for example, Shenandoah National Park was already being managed by the NPS and the ANST was never intended to overwhelm the pre-existing management prerogatives of that park, or usurp management authority from the Chief of the Forest Service for White Mountain National Forest, as an example. Trail administration and trail/land management have been different from the inception of the NTS.

²⁰ Essentially, law enforcement, compliance, title of lands, and oversight of overall management and operation. These are the core responsibilities of "trail administration." *Solicitor's Opinion on Delegation to ATC*, March 17, 1983, p.4.

²¹ The development of the ANST began with the publishing of *An Appalachian Trail: A Project in Regional Planning*, *Journal of American Institute of Architects*, October 1921. It is accessible at: <https://appalachiantrail.org/our-work/an-appalachian-trail-a-project-in-regional-planning/>.

²² *The Appalachian Trailway Agreement*, October 15, 1938.

²³ Via P.L. 95-248, *To Amend the National Trails System Act, and for other purposes*, March 21, 1978 and P.L. 95-625, *National Parks and Recreational Lands Act of 1978*, November, 10, 1978.

²⁴ P.L. 98-11, *To amend the National Trails System Act by designating additional national scenic and historic trails, and for other purposes*, March 28, 1983.

²⁵ Today, the ATC remains mentioned in 16 U.S.C. 1244(d) and (e), but its role is not outlined. No other NSHT partner is named in the NTSA.

permissible authorities and laying out clear requirements and guardrails for behavior, the ATCA confirms that the disaggregated model of management authorities is successful and appropriate for NSHTs. S. 2708 recognizes this disaggregation as well as the necessity of sufficiently empowered partner organizations.

As drafted, with the exception of the recognition of ATC as the first “Designated Operational Partner” (DOP), no other NSHT would be required to have a DOP. Trails that have one or more organizations supporting the breadth of work that the ATCA does for the ANST could have more than one DOP. Even with a DOP, the trail administrator would be able to enter into cooperative agreements with other organizations to do work on NSHTs. DOPs would have specific responsibility for the trail they operate, but responsibilities that are not necessary for every trail.²⁶ Establishing DOPs reflects the reality of trail operation today, maintains the opportunity to broaden partnerships with for a NSHT, and provides legal clarity on how organizations like the ATC are a distinct class of NGO partners for a discrete slice of the federal public lands world.²⁷

The question of how to recognize and support the organizations that serve such important roles on the NSHTs is complex to answer, as is the question of how to increase clarity for NSHT partnerships while maintaining the flexibility of the NTSA. Each of the three federal land management agencies that administer NSHTs (the NPS, USFS, and Bureau of Land Management) have different structures, authorizations, funding, and cultures. Each of the 32 NSHTs are different, and National Scenic Trails are administered and operate differently from National Historic Trails. At the intersection of each agency and each partner are unique challenges. We are eager for feedback from our NGO and federal partners on how to best address the challenges of NSHT administration, operation, and management as we advise Senators Tillis and Kaine on how to strengthen the A.T. in a way that would also strengthen the National Trails System and as many of its partnerships as possible.

Unlocking the Promise of NSHTs

The ANST is the most invested-in NSHT since the establishment of the NTS. This is due to a variety of factors, but none of them predetermine that the ANST should be the only NSHT developed to the degree that it has been. In designating an NSHT, Congress recognizes potential and provides some tools to unlock that potential. A lock without a key, however, remains forever closed. By directing the agencies to report on the state of the trails and determine how to build out the trails Congress has established, the ATCA will focus agency and partner attention on these dynamic public land units, bringing new populations of citizen stewards into the fold,

²⁶ The A.T. is the most developed NSHT, primarily in terms of land holdings. As the quintessential NST, the special authorities/responsibilities the ATCA imbues in DOPs reflect ATC’s experiences. Advancing land protection, protecting those lands outside the exterior boundaries of federal reservations, greater standing in the development or amendment of comprehensive plans, and the acceptance of surplus personal property (e.g. tools) from federal land managers are all responses to challenges ATC has faced and believes other trails will face as they continue to develop.

²⁷ Organizations like the ATC are often slotted into inappropriate categories (such as being misunderstood as cooperating associations or “friends” groups); clarifying our collection of roles and connections to the public land units we work on is something we believe will benefit partnership networks, rather than detract from the community of partnership.

promoting vulnerable histories, protecting at-risk ecosystems, and unlocking the maximum recreational potential at a time of overwhelming interest in outdoor recreation.

Despite what we would describe as the unqualified success of the partnership-dependent, volunteer-centered, and multi-jurisdictional A.T. Project, the federal trail administrators have never quite supported these public land units the way that they support more conventional units of the System, National Forest System, or National Conservation Lands System.²⁸ For example, the staffing levels of NSHTs are entirely incommensurate with their acreage, estimated visitation, or the complexity of their partnerships.²⁹ Although the NPS and USFS measure visitation and economic impact for most of their units, they do not do so for the NSHTs.³⁰ Because official status is so important to the agencies—and rightfully so, because they are charged to follow Congress’ directions—the full suite of funding streams, planning tools, and management authorities that exist for other System units have been denied the NSHTs.³¹ The ATCA’s requirement to gather this information will better support NSHTs, their Congressionally identified values, and the public.³²

At its core, the ATCA reflects the reality of day-to-day operations of the ANST, the most invested-in, developed, and successful National Scenic Trail, as it exists today and declares what is necessary to support and enhance the NTS. The ATC is also grateful to Senators Tillis and Kaine for S. 2708’s recognition of the indispensable role of the A.T. Clubs, the first-ever statutory acknowledgement of their importance to the ANST. The ATC began coordinating this effort upon its founding in 1925, looking to the A.T. Clubs to develop the relationships necessary throughout the ANST’s 14 states to build the Trail itself. The historical and ongoing work of the A.T. Clubs cannot be understated, as there would simply be no ANST without this corps of dispersed, expert volunteers and non-governmental organizations.

We are eager to advance the discussion on the importance of the NTS and the partnerships that enable it as well as to do the hard work itself, as we have been doing for nearly 100 years. The ATCA is the product of years of discussion within both the Cooperative Management System (CMS) of the ANST and with our partners throughout the NTS. The ATC is not proprietary of the NTS, nor do we believe we have all the answers. We are committed to continue working to strengthen and secure the partnership nature of the NSHTs with our partners. We also understand that the three trail administering agencies—the National Park Service (NPS), the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM)—approach trail administration in differing ways. We appreciate the extensive and substantive feedback the USFS has provided, as well as the discussions with the NPS, which Senators Kaine and Tillis

²⁸ That is to say, the federal agency approach to budgeting both assumes substantial non-governmental support and does not consider the state of development for any given NSHT. The recent NPS granting of “unit status” to three NPS-administered NSHTs was a response to improper resourcing and support for those (now-)units.

²⁹ The ATC and partners in the NTS community have doggedly advocated for attention to this issue, with increasingly positive responses from Congress as well as Presidential administrations.

³⁰ See footnote 6, *supra*

³¹ The NPS provides an excellent example. See, generally, *Decision Memorandum for the Director to Request the Director to Administratively Designate Three National Scenic Trails as Units of the National Park System and Initiate a Policy Process for Granting Unit Status for Other National Scenic or Historic Trails*, November 16, 2023.

³² There are many challenges in the development of the federal budget. The ATC does not argue that all of this information would necessarily result in higher allocations for NSHTs; rather, comparing apples to apples would facilitate the adjusting of budgets to more appropriate levels.

incorporated into S.2708. We look forward to working with the Senators and others on improving the proposal and encourage Congress and the Executive Branch to conserve and support the National Scenic and Historic Trails, which we believe should remain available accessible for future generations of Americans to enjoy and experience.

Respectfully,



Brendan Mysliwiec
Director of Federal Policy
Appalachian Trail Conservancy



**CONSOLIDATED QUESTIONS BASED ON
APPALACHIAN TRAIL CENTENNIAL ACT OVERVIEW FACTSHEET**

NPS Aggregated Questions/Comments Addressed:

Why is the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) seeking to legislate on all National Scenic and Historic Trails (NSHTs) and not simply on the Appalachian National Scenic Trail (ANST)?

The ANST is the single most invested-in of all the NSHTs, but that does not mean that it is the only NSHT worthy of investment. Millions of people, from agency and NGO personnel to volunteers and visitors have leveraged time, talent, and treasure to make the ANST an international conservation and recreation icon. The amount of attention the ANST has gotten has been tremendously valuable, and we are grateful for it. The ANST is not the only NSHT, however, and ours is not the only worthy partnership within the National Trails System (NTS). ATC is using its centennial anniversary not just to secure the ANST's cooperative management, but shine a light on our sister trails and their partnerships so that as many of us may benefit as possible.

NPS Aggregated Questions/Comments Addressed:

How is the vocabulary of "land management" different on the ANST and throughout the NTS, and how does that cause confusion?

On the Appalachian National Scenic Trail (ANST), as well as on other National Scenic and Historic Trails (NSHTs), the responsibilities of "park management" are shared between cooperators rather than existing solely within the purview of the federal land manager (the "trail administrator" or non-administrator "local land manager"). The division between federal trail administrator responsibilities, state, non-governmental (NGO) co-manager, and volunteer maintainers is frequently misunderstood outside of a given trail, and the divisions may differ from NSHT to NSHT. Ultimately, unlike in "square parks," the trail administrator or local land manager is not running the park and attending to its needs all on its own. Trail administration is not necessarily trail management is not necessarily land management, a deviation that the NTSA takes from general federal resource management practices.

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) already cooperates with ANST section-specific land managers – federal, state, local, and private – in conservation and resource management activities up and down the Trail. This legislation is not intended to, and does not on its face, restrict the final decision-making authority of those land managers as regards their charges under the statute to uphold the public trust. On the ANST and in the NTS, the management roles and responsibilities of ATC and other trail-specific NGO cooperative managers are not, and will not under this proposal, be the same as the management authority held by local land managers. For example, a given NSHT NGO cooperative manager may collect the data and draft the initial documentation needed to produce a National Environmental Policy Act document, but that

1

Please contact Brendan Mysliwiec, director of federal policy, at bmysliwiec@appalachiantrail.org with questions.

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activity is subject to the final action by and oversight of the trail administrator and/or local land manager and would remain so under the ATCA.

NPS Aggregated Questions/Comments Addressed:

It appears this legislation is intended to apply to all National Trails. Given that NGOs are not as "permanent" as agencies, what are some potential downsides of designating NGOs as co-managers of NSHTs in legislation? Would the legislation call out a specific NGO for each national trail like ATC for the ANST or refer to NGOs designated by the Secretary? The higher-up a designation is made, the harder it will be to change it.

In the ACTA, ATC is seeking to share its centennial anniversary with the entirety of the NTS in order to make improvements to the NTS for the benefit of all managers and users. As with the 1968 NTSA, this updated model would start with the ANST (statutorily naming ATC a Designated Operational Partner or "DOP") but then allow other trail-managing NGOs who meet certain criteria outlined in the ACTA to be designated as a DOP by the applicable Secretary. The Secretary would retain rescission authority over the DMP status of any organization other than ATC. The Secretarial discretion, adhering to certain required guidelines, would ensure that entering into and, if necessary, ending a DOP agreement with a given NGO, would be in the best interest of the NSHT and its CMS. With exceptions, each organization that serves in a lead NGO with the agency administrator has a relationship as old as the trail itself, if not older. ATC, for example, is only nine years younger than the NPS, and predates the ANST's designation by 43 years. Many similar organizations predate the designation of the NSHT they cooperatively manage and, in fact, were instrumental in that NSHT's designation.

NPS Aggregated Questions/Comments Addressed:

What level of responsibility and support provided by lead non-governmental cooperative management partner(s) needs to be clarified and enhanced?

NSHTs have always been intended to be partnership conservation units. We can say this with authority because the Appalachian Trail was the model for National Scenic Trails and for the National Trails System. The legislative back-and-forth on the partnership nature of NSHTs has been to more clearly refine to the Executive Branch what Congress intended in the National Trails System, with the (now) ANST's Cooperative Management System as the original model.

For most or all NSHTs, non-governmental cooperative management partners are essential. If ATC or the A.T. Clubs stopped their work immediately, for example, regular trail operations on the ANST would cease; many other NSHTs would be in a similar position. Recognizing this kind of capacity, responsibility, and necessity to trail operations with a discrete designation is appropriate. It clarifies the nature of the partnership in the broader universe of agency partnerships.

Moreover, the DOP framework will hopefully provide Congress with more guidance on what happens after an NSHT is designated. A natural next step after designation is for the lead NGO cooperative manager to strive to meet the criteria for DOP status and seek Secretarial designation.

The most recent substantive amendment to the NTSA to secure the substantive roles volunteers and volunteer organizations (like ATC) play on NSHTs was in 1983, in the face of agency confusion on how much organizations like ATC and the A.T. Clubs were truly expected to do. This proposal builds on the original Act and those 1983 amendments in particular to move cooperative management from an administrative creature supported by administrative documents and historical norms to something enshrined in substantive law.

NPS Aggregated Questions/Comments Addressed:

What is the difference between "local" recognition of cooperative management and the CMS, such as through a General Management Plan, Forest Plan, Resource Management Plan and "global" recognition of cooperative management that is intended through a Comprehensive Plan and would be possible through statute?

Under the current framework, trail administrators can and do "locally" recognize cooperative management in Comprehensive Plans, which are, under the NTSA, designed to apply across jurisdictions, and local management plans that tier off of them. Comprehensive Plans, while intended to be global, are not treated as such universally throughout the federal lands system. More consistently impactful are the implementation of a Comprehensive Plan's precepts in the plans for intersected units (e.g. a management area in a Forest Plan); these local incorporations have been most successful on the ANST, however, as compared to other NSHTs.

On the ANST, the three-legged stool of the Cooperative Management System is well-documented by our Comprehensive Plan and other administrative documents. Similarly, Directors Order (D.O.) 45 offers System-wide administrative guidance that includes many references to cooperation (also with mixed results in adherence). Despite this, however, there is nothing that currently provides a permanent, "global" recognition of the Cooperative Management System to reflect the intention of Congress in creating NSHTs as partnership conservation units.

Establishing a "global" recognition of cooperative management not only garners long-term protection for the successful cooperative management structures against the vagaries of an individual administration or administrator, but also reduces the amount of required education for cooperative management. Rather than producing a unit-specific planning document or resurfacing an MOU, trail administrators may cite directly to the statute that declares that NSHTs are designed to be partnership parks with substantial NGO participation in management without diminishing the non-delegable roles of trail administrators. This proposal is *process-* and not *outcome-*determinative.

NPS Aggregated Questions/Comments Addressed:

Beyond formal recognition of the class of lead cooperative managing NGOs that ATC belongs to among the NSHTs, what in the proposal would improve cooperative management and how would this proposal advance that? In what specific ways will this proposal strengthen the partnership?

While formal recognition of DOP status and clarification of cooperative management are the core objectives, other provisions will improve NSHT management from ATC's perspective.

First, the legislative proposal requires that state and federal land managers factor decisions about volunteers and varied land management responsibilities from the beginning of their decision-making processes and, “to the extent practicable, remedy constraints on supporting the role of volunteers and volunteer organizations on covered trails.”

Second, this legislation authorizes a cooperative response to external threats to National Scenic or Historic Trails (NSHTs) by allowing DMPs to press violations of the property rights of the United States relating to a NSHT, something that is important due to the low priority such violations seem to possess for the trail administrators who are solely empowered to address them as well as trails’ boundaries being often far from land management offices.

Third, this legislation would structure the DOP role in “periodically compiling and submitting to the Secretary concerned and other appropriate agencies a priority list for land and resource protection.” This aspect of the proposal recognizes ATC’s longstanding role on the ANST and that of other lead co-managing NGOs on their respective trails. Building off the historical practice of ATC and the Clubs and the co-NPS convened Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership, the inclusion of this authority and framework will model for other NSHTs engagement for landscape-scale conservation. Establishing an NSHT is generally the beginning and not the end of the trail development process. Despite the broad land and resource protection authority within the NTSA, it is a frequent refrain from the NPS that there is insufficient direction for NSHTs regarding land and resource protection. In this proposal, the applicable Secretary retains discretion in selecting which of these projects advances for federal funding.

Finally, the proposal would permit the conveyance of surplus federal equipment to DOPs for use in managing and maintaining each DOP’s respective covered trail, and it would allow the Designated Management Partner cooperative agreements to be for a term of 20 years to account for high-functioning and productive partnerships.

NPS Aggregated Questions/Comments Addressed:

What is the vision for the A.T. Clubs’ and volunteers’ roles in this new designation?

Volunteers and A.T. Clubs are envisioned to continue to serve their long-time maintenance and cooperative management roles on the ANST following the enactment of the ATCA. It is ATC’s intention, that, with itself identified as a DOP, the NGO and volunteer components of the ANST’s CMS will be better represented and better able to advocate for all constituencies within the CMS. The ATCA highlights the importance of Comprehensive Plans as the vehicle through which an individual NSHT’s CMS is defined and how cooperative managers are accountable to each other.

This Act includes the first statutory recognition of the importance and role of A.T. Clubs. The responsibilities of a DOP under this proposal are very different from the traditional roles of A.T. Clubs because ATC is the model for a DOP. The A.T. Clubs’ roles are outlined in the Comprehensive Plan, local management plans, and subsidiary agreements, as they have been since 1981 and are not subject to necessary change on the basis of this proposed statutory improvement.

NPS Aggregated Questions/Comments Addressed:

How would statutory recognition of cooperative management and DMPs impact how volunteers on the ANST and other NSHTs are managed?

This proposal would statutorily put partnership first on NSHTs. Volunteering for a NSHT is not the same as volunteering for any given National Park System or National Forest System unit. The NSHTs have dispersed, expert, and independently driven volunteer corps operating without the high degree of direct oversight more common throughout the NPS and NFS. Decisions made at the headquarters levels of the NPS and USFS do not include the direct involvement of trail administrators and rarely include the expert volunteer corps that co-manage and maintain the NSHTs. The ATCA would recognize the importance of volunteers in operating NSHTs and would require their consideration in making administration or management decisions that impact their ability to serve their important roles.

NPS Aggregated Questions/Comments Addressed:

Is ATC seeking to rebalance trail administration authorities/the non-delegable responsibilities of the trail administrator? How is accountability to the public, and the federal trust obligations of trail administrator impacted by the statutory protection of cooperative management and the recognition of the class Designated Operational Partners?

ATC stands by the fundamental agreement included in the 1968 NTSA. ATC understands that this agreement offered the unprotected Appalachian Trail Corridor an opportunity to evolve into the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, a component of the federal public lands system, and that certain responsibilities and authorities regarding the A.T. would be vested only in the federal government. The sole aspect of the proposal that is a shift from historical practice—yet is precedential in federal public lands law—is the ability to petition the United States for redress regarding violations of its property rights in a given NSHT. With this exception, we believe that the non-delegable responsibilities of NSHT trail administrator must remain solely with the trail administrator.

Final decision-making authority is where public accountability is retained. Under the ATCA, the final say on any particular NSHT trail administration decision would still remain with the agency administrator since they hold the federal trust obligation. Similarly, non-delegable responsibilities such as criminal law enforcement, NEPA/NHPA compliance, agency personnel decisions, etc. would stay the exclusive domain of the agency administrator. This legislation does not seek to fundamentally rebalance anything, only secure (and modestly build upon) the balance that has served the NTS well for half a century.

NPS Aggregated Questions/Comments Addressed:

Would identification as a DMP make an NGO Congressionally chartered? Would it impact their existing First Amendment or other Constitutional rights?

No. DOPs would continue to be able to speak directly with elected officials. Nothing in this proposal makes ATC or other DOPs quasi-governmental authorities. Accordingly, no restrictions

are placed on those organizations' ability to engage Members of Congress or their staff or otherwise exercise their full suite of Constitutional rights.

NPS Aggregated Questions/Comments Addressed:

What agreements, if any, regarding NSHT co-management would be required to be changed due to the passage of the legislation, on what timeline, and in which ways?

Because by and large the relationships and shared management responsibilities are not changing, there is no great necessity to re-negotiate agreements. As agreements expire or if the range of negotiated responsibilities shift, they may need to be updated if a given trail has an identified DMP. Following the identification of a DOP for a given trail, the governing cooperative agreement would likely need to be identified to a DOP cooperative agreement.

NPS Aggregated Questions/Comments Addressed:

Will the enactment of the ATCA and establishment of DOPs make an already complex co-management structure more complicated? If so, how?

No. The ATCA intends to statutorily secure the high-water mark of the CMS and clarify the permanence and importance that Congress is placing on those partnerships. In that sense, it is not adding complexity but rather taking away some degree of ambiguity. Our expectation is that the ATCA would make things easier by clarifying across all agencies the partnership nature of NSHTs and the need to remove barriers for substantive shared stewardship work relying on volunteers and volunteer organizations.

NPS Aggregated Questions/Comments Addressed:

Why is legislation addressing visitor use issues more desirable than using existing authorities?

The agencies have not universally applied their existing authorities to the NSHTs, so further direction is needed, such as Congress did in the EXPLORE Act, where it required that the visitation of all federal units (including NSHTs) be reported. The requirements outlined in this proposal are intended to build upon ongoing agency work and direct overdue attention to visitor economic impact of NSHTs as well as how to further develop the NSHTs in accordance with the purposes of the NTSA.

NPS Aggregated Questions/Comments Addressed:

Are there extended, multi-state and multi-jurisdictional examples of successful cooperative management structures?

The ANST is the single best example of successful co-management structure on a unit as multi-jurisdictional as an NSHT. That this largely successful extended, multi-state, and multi-jurisdictional federal public land unit is not understood as such—even within the agencies—reflects the need to codify the partnership status of the ANST and other NSHTs.

NPS Aggregated Questions/Comments Addressed:

How would statutory recognition of cooperative management and the class of DOPs impact the ability of the trail administrator to partner with states and tribes?

The relationship between the United States and any Native nation is between sovereigns, which DMPs are not designed to be. ATC recognizes the importance of entering into the kinds of agreements that could continue to be made with place-based connections to the A.T., such as states or tribes. ATC does believe that changes in the management structure or responsibilities of the ANST should only occur with the participation of ATC, and the same for other NSHTs NGOs on their respective NSHTs. The ATCA explicitly allows for different types of agreements with states, land managers, or other entities to address aspects of NSHT operation not addressed in a given DOP agreement. Illustratively, certain tasks were expressly assigned by Congress to ATC in the 1978 NTSA amendments. They neither impacted the Clubs' role nor reduced NPS authority to enter into agreements with entities other than ATC. No entity other than ATC has demonstrated interest or ability in occupying the trail-wide co-management role ATC created and has filled for nearly a century.

NPS Aggregated Questions/Comments Addressed:

What are the overall needs of the NTS? How does this proposal address them?

In addition to the permanent recognition of cooperative management, funding (public and private), staff capacity (public and private), and relative recognition with the agencies (i.e., the unit status disparity for NPS-administered NSHTs) remain major challenges. The pace and scale of land protection along NSHT corridors is another recurring issue. The ATCA is meant to respond to, not eliminate, challenges on the NTS. It may be that no single action, legislation, Executive Order, or other instrument of change can be a panacea. Only sustained engagement, appropriate attention, and persistent education will allow for the ongoing improvement of these partnership parks (or forests, or conservation lands).

From: [Vassiliki A.](#)
To: [fortherecord \(Enerov\)](#); [Teegarden, Tori \(Barrasso\)](#); [Walker, Lahra \(Daines\)](#); [Harbin, Christine \(Cassidy\)](#); [Burks, Jen \(Hirono\)](#); [Plath, Savannah \(Galleo\)](#); [Gustafson, Eric \(Hoeven\)](#); [Chitre, Jui \(Kaine\)](#)
Subject: Please Support S.1377 with Essential Amendments
Date: Tuesday, December 16, 2025 10:27:56 PM

I urge you to support S.1377 with the amendments submitted by Chasing Horses Wild Horse Advocates. These amendments ensure genetic viability, protect all 200 current horses, and establish a collaborative working group for responsible management.
Thank you for supporting the wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

Vassiliki Anderjaska
310 Wallman Way
Stevensville, MD, 21666

From: [Mel Bloom](#)
To: [fortherecord \(Energy\)](#)
Subject: Request for Hearing Info & Testimony Opportunity on H.R. 2290
Date: Thursday, January 22, 2026 4:03:51 PM

Good morning,

My name is Mel Bloom. I'm an Air Force Veteran and founder of an organization called 3-5-0 Girls, a public history project focused on preserving the legacy of women who served in the Armed Forces during World War II.

I'm reaching out to find out when the next hearing on H.R. 2290, the World War II Women's Memorial Location Act, will take place and how I might volunteer to testify or otherwise provide input on behalf of women WWII veterans.

A committee hearing on H.R. 2290 was previously held in the House Subcommittee on Federal Lands on July 16, 2025, and the bill was considered by the House Committee on Natural Resources before passing the House. The bill has since been received in the Senate and referred to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

If there are upcoming hearings or opportunities to submit testimony (oral or written), I would be grateful for guidance on how to participate. Additionally, if you could point me toward the appropriate contacts within the committee or staff who handle witness coordination, that would be incredibly helpful.

Thank you so much for your time and any direction you can provide.

Best regards,
Mel Bloom
Executive Director
threefiveohgirls.com
US Air Force Veteran

From: [Chasing Horses Wild Horse Advocates](#)
To: [fortherecord \(Energy\)](#); [Neilson, Belle \(Energy\)](#)
Subject: S1377
Date: Monday, December 15, 2025 5:19:26 PM

Energy and Natural Resources Committee Office

Subcommittee on National Parks

304 Dirksen Senate Building

Washington, DC 20510

Re: S1377 requested amendments

Dear Committee Members:

My name is Christine Kman. I am the president of Chasing Horses Wild Horse Advocates (CHWA).

We are a nonprofit organization in North Dakota that advocates for the wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park. Our organization has worked diligently over the last three years to save this historic herd of wild horses. I am writing to you today to ask that the committee consider the amendments we are requesting to clarify the rationale behind our amendments.

I also want to note that there are currently 23 organizations/groups that support the amendments we are requesting:

Chasing Horses Wild Horse Advocates
 Kuntz Nokota Ranch
 Pryor Mountain Wild Mustang Center
 Wild Horse Education
 Oregon Wild Horse Organization
 Sandy Sharkey Photography
 The Wild Beauty Foundation
 Horse Plus Legislative Coalition
 American Wild Horse Conservation
 The Nokota Preserve Chester Springs, PA
 National Wild Horse Conference
 Preserving American Wildlife
 TrapFree America
 Caroline Christie Art
 Living Images by Carol Walker
 Andean Tapir Fund
 National Treasure Mustang Rescue & Sanctuary
 Wild at Heart Images
 The Wild Horse Preserve at Grayce Wynds
 Windancer Foundation Inc.
 Lily's Wild Heart, Inc.
 Central Oregon Wild Horse Coalition
 In Defense of Animals

These organizations, along with their followers, have also been emailing the committee this week requesting the amendments we have submitted.

This herd of wild horses that call Theodore Roosevelt National Park (TRNP) home have been part of the park's landscape since before it was fenced in 1947. They have a history that pays tribute to Theodore Roosevelt, North Dakota's ranching history and North Dakota's rich Native culture.

As one of the least visited states in the US, the Theodore Roosevelt wild horses also drive tourism to the area. Small businesses in the town of Medora realize that at least 25% of their business each year is directly linked to the 200 wild horses that currently call the park home.

The state of North Dakota was shocked in 2022 when the park announced their plans to eliminate the entire herd from the park. Our organization worked with Senator John Hoeven, Governor Doug Burgum and our state legislators to save this iconic wild horse herd. Our legislators repeatedly heard from people all across the globe who love this herd. Local news covered the story on a regular basis. Our advocacy also caught the attention of The Wall Street Journal and The Washington Post. Even The Times in London covered the story.

These horses are well loved by tens of thousands of people.

Yet, the park has a long history of trying to eliminate the horses. Each and every time, as Senator Hoeven stated last week, the park has been met with OVERWHELMING opposition.

In April of 2024, after once again being faced with overwhelming opposition, the park officially abandoned their plans to eliminate this herd. Our organization aims to ensure that these horses never face the threat of removal again.

During our North Dakota legislative session this year, our North Dakota state legislators unanimously passed Senate Concurrent Resolution SCR 4006. This resolution asked specifically for federal protection for this herd. Over the past three years, our North Dakota state legislators, along with the City of Historic Medora and the Billings County Commission have all passed numerous resolutions asking for a genetically viable herd of horses to remain in the park.

Shortly after SCR 4006 passed this spring, Senator Hoeven introduced S1377 – The Theodore Roosevelt National Park Wild Horse Protection Act. This legislation, as the Senator has pointed out, was modeled after The Shackleford Banks Wild Horses Protection Act which is now Public Law 105-229.

We are grateful to Senator Hoeven and Senator Kaine for introducing this legislation. However, given the park's history of trying to remove the horses, we do not feel that this legislation, as it is currently written, gives clear Congressional parameters for the park to follow. In fact, we believe that it leaves too many loopholes that will eventually compromise this unique herd of horses because the park is only mandated to make sure that not fewer than 150 horses remain in the park. To followers and advocates for this herd, the specific horses that have evolved to survive and thrive in the Badlands of North Dakota are the ones we are all speaking up for at this time.

The most important amendment we are seeking is exactly what has made the Shackleford Banks legislation successful: an agreement between the park and our nonprofit organization to form a wild horse working group. This group, with help from community experts and leaders, would not only provide much needed oversight to the park, but also help the park with the future management of this herd.

We know that current National Park Service budgets have been cut and as Senator King noted in the

hearing last week, there are plans to make additional cuts to their budget by one third.

The goal of this proposed working group we are proposing is to bring together experts with backgrounds in science, such as independent geneticists, history, including North Dakota's rich equine history as well as insight from Tribal communities, as well as local businesses and advocacy groups.

Our organization has been reaching out to members of the community, namely, Dickinson State University's Equine Studies Program. The department head stated that the university would welcome the opportunity to work with the park. Aside from being a great way to repair relationships with the community, partnerships like this can help not only the students, but also the park with staffing issues they are facing. We have also talked with local veterinarians and other community members who are more than willing to help the park establish and maintain best management practices for the state's beloved wild horses.

The formation of this working group will also help alleviate advocates' other concerns, including the aggressive use of the controversial drug GonaCon. This drug has been used on this herd since the park partnered with Colorado State University starting in 2009. That experiment, and subsequent aggressive use of this drug, has permanently sterilized at least 3 mares and has caused the majority of the mares in this herd to be rendered infertile. The park itself has stated they do not know if any of the mares will return to fertility.

When I first started documenting this herd in 2016, 42 foals were born that year. Granted, that is too many foals yearly for this herd in a fenced in national park. In comparison, in 2025, we currently have six living foals. Six foals a year cannot maintain the genetically viable herd this legislation mandates.

Another amendment we are requesting is changing the horse population from "not fewer than 150 horses" to "not fewer than 200 horses that are native to this park." There are currently just under 200 horses in the park. They are all in good health and thriving. About one quarter of the herd is part of an older population we expect to lose in the near future. Our organization wants to make sure the current herd is allowed to remain in the park.

In his speech to this committee last week, Senator Hoven stressed the importance of a genetically viable herd remaining in Theodore Roosevelt National Park. His words specifically mentioned "viable" not "diverse." We are also requesting that the words "genetic diversity" be changed to "genetically viable." The genetics of this particular herd cannot be found anywhere else. This was most recently noted in a paper co-authored by TRNP staff that discussed the unique matrilinear lineages that exist within this herd.

Part of the park's history includes introducing "new blood" into the park. Park staff have admitted this has always been an epic failure. Advocates and fans of these horses want to make sure the horses that are native to this park and unique to the state of North Dakota are the ones this legislation protects. This is why we support Senator Hoeven stressing the need for a "genetically viable" herd as opposed to a "genetically diverse" herd which could result in the infiltration of other horses not native to North Dakota.

The legislation calls for the park to create a management plan within 120 days of the enactment of this legislation. The last management plan the park created was in 1978! While we agree a

management plan needs to be a top priority for the park, 120 days does not give enough time for the park to conduct a proper Environmental Impact Statement, as required under current NEPA laws. After 47 years, we want to make sure the park, with the help of the working group, brings forward the best possible management plan that also includes required public input.

There is also no mention within this legislation on how often the park will have to re-evaluate its management plan. Our organization does not want another 47 years to go by before the park creates a new management plan. We are requesting that the park be mandated to create a new management plan every 10 years or when they are considering using new science as a management tool, whichever comes first.

The final amendment we are requesting is that the park cease any further experimentation or research on this herd unless fully disclosed and discussed with the working group.

We mentioned earlier that the park collaborated with Colorado State University to experiment on this herd with GonaCon. That experiment went on for 11 years and, as previously stated, has rendered most of the mares infertile. Last year, the park decided to put tracking collars on the horses. This is something that is unnecessary, as there are more than enough advocates willing to help track the horses in such a small park. The public is tired of this herd being experimented on.

More importantly, the park has not consulted with the public before entering into agreements that can negatively impact the health of the herd, as mandated by current National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) laws. This is yet another place where an objective working group can help make decisions that are best for North Dakota's only wild horse herd.

Thank you for taking the time to consider these amendments. I am available to speak to the committee or your offices individually about any or all of these requests.

Sincerely,

Christine Kman
Chasing Horses Wild Horse Advocates
www.chwha.org

From: goodshepherd@comporium.net
To: [fortherecord \(Enerov\)](#); [Teegarden, Tori \(Barrasso\)](#); [Walker, Lahra \(Daines\)](#); [Harbin, Christine \(Cassidy\)](#); [Burks, Jen \(Hirono\)](#); [Plath, Savannah \(Gallego\)](#); [Gustafson, Eric \(Hoeven\)](#); [Chitre, Jui \(Kaine\)](#)
Subject: Protecting the irreplaceable wild horse herd at Theodore Roosevelt National Park
Date: Tuesday, December 16, 2025 6:26:26 PM

I urge you to support S.1377 with the amendments submitted by Chasing Horses Wild Horse Advocates. These amendments ensure genetic viability, protect all 200 current horses, and establish a collaborative working group for responsible management.

Thank you for supporting the wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park as part of our natural heritage for our children and grandchildren to inherit. Don't destroy that.
Sincerely,

Dr. Heide Catherina Coppotelli
383 Seldon Emerson Rd.
Cedar Mountain, NC 28718
828-884-4673

Chairman Senator Steven Daines
 Ranking Member Senator Angus King
 Committee on Energy & Natural Resources
 Subcommittee on National Parks

12/10/2025

Senator Daines and Senator King,

We are writing concerning S.2708, the Appalachian Trail Centennial Act. We represent organizations which are the long term primary private partners of the US Forest Service and other federal agencies in the management, protection and operations of three of the congressionally designated National Scenic Trails: The Pacific Crest Trail, The Pacific Northwest Trail, and The Arizona Trail. After extensive review and analysis of the current bill, we wish to convey the following:

- 1) That we support the concept and purposes of the bill, namely, to strengthen the public/private cooperative management system for the National Trails System and to bolster the planning, protection, and management of the National Trails System.
- 2) That we will continue to work with Senators and the subcommittee, as well as our organizational and agency partners, to make recommendations needed to increase the effectiveness and clarity of the proposed congressional direction in the bill.
- 3) That we intend to work with Senators for the states traversed by our trails to seek congressional Designated Operational Partner status for our organizations within the framework of the bill, through this legislation.

Thank you for this opportunity to supply our thoughts on this legislation that directly impacts, and will strengthen, our decades-long work on these trails for the public benefit. PCTA's work on the PCT dates back to the 1930s and the PCT was designated as a National Scenic Trail at the same time as the AT was in 1968. The work of AZTA and PNTA goes back decades before the congressional designation in 2009. We believe the bill, with additional work, will supply additional direction and clarify aspects of the National Trails System Act so that it will be an important companion to the NTSA.

Mike Dawson

Mark Larabee, Advocacy Director, Pacific Crest Trail Association

Justin Kooyman, Director of Trail Operations, Pacific Crest Trail Association

Jeff Kish, Executive Director, Pacific Northwest Trail Association

Matthew Nelson, Executive Director, Arizona Trail Association

Recommendations for refinement of the Appalachian Trail Centennial Act

12/8/2025

This document contains the results of a review of the current draft of the Appalachian Trail Centennial Act (ATCA) and includes suggestions for general conceptual and specific wording changes. These recommendations have been formulated by colleagues associated with NSTs administered by the US Forest Service who have been discussing the ATCA for the past few months. The organizations involved have an interest in being designated as Designated Operational Partners for the trails that they manage, assuming the kinds of changes below are adopted. These recommendations were formulated and come to ATC from Mike Dawson, Justin Kooyman and Mark Larabee representing PCTA, Jeff Kish representing PNTA and Matt Nelson representing AZTA. The three organizations seek designation as Designated Operating Partners for their respective trails, assuming these recommendations can be incorporated into the legislation.

Overall Conceptual

We would suggest that the act contain direction that applies to specific national trails system (NTS) trails including the AT but also including other trails that “opt into” inclusion to specific provisions of the act, as well as some direction for either all national scenic and historic trails (NS&HTs) or all NSTs or NHTs dependent upon content. Being conscious of the differences between NSTs and NHTs, we have addressed ATCA language that applies to NSTs in general and specifically that applies to the trails and organizations seeking designated operational partner (DOP) designations that participated in this review work. We have been mute regarding direction for NHTs and look to NHT partner organizations to suggest appropriate direction and language for how those trails should be addressed in the legislation.

Depending on the final content of the bill, wording may need to be altered in the first line of the bill.

Specific Wording

Sec.2 Congressional Declaration of Policy

(1) see slight changes in wording:

“the large landscape conservation work relating to national scenic trails, as per 16 U.S.C. § 1246 which establishes national scenic trails rights-of-ways, is built on...”

(2)(B) change “federally designated” to “congressionally designated”. This matches the language used in several agency policy documents that pertain to NS&HTs.

(9) change to “...are empowered and authorized...”

Specific Wording

Sec. 3 Definitions

Add definition of “landscape conservation tools”

(7) Gateway Community – suggest changing “in the vicinity of a covered trail” to “a municipality or unincorporated *settlement within 10 miles of a covered trail, or with an established connection to recreational use of the trail or to management or maintenance of the trail.*”

(13) Visitor Capacity – add a statement and reference that says this term refers to the direction in the NTSA that uses the wording carrying capacity to make clear the intentions of the NTSA.

(13) VISITOR CAPACITY.— The term “visitor capacity”, which is built on the direction and term “carrying capacity”, as per 16 U.S.C. § 1244, means, with respect to a covered trail, the maximum number and types of visitor use that the covered trail can accommodate while achieving and maintaining the desired resource conditions and visitor experiences that are consistent with the purposes for which the covered trail was established, which may vary for different segments of a covered trail.

Specific Wording

Sec.4 Strengthening Admin. Mgmt & Operation of NS&HTs

(a)(2) change wording to say “... a component of the National Trails System...”

(a)(2) change wording here to say, “when administered by the National Park Service, a unit of the National Park Service System.”

(a)(3) add this section – “National Scenic (and Historic?) Trails, when administered by the United States Forest Service (USFS), or lie within or in proximity to USFS managed lands will have designated management areas established that encompass the entire length of each national scenic trail, will be of sufficient width, and managed accordingly to provide for the “nature and purposes” of each trail, as per 16 U.S.C. § 1246”

Note from edit above: After seeing Steven and Travis' comments on the bill, you will see "(and Historic?)" in several places as it seemed that their comments question applicability to their trails.

This creates the kind of recognition for the NSHTs that is sought for NPS administered trails in (a)(2) within the management system set up by Congress for the USFS in the National Forest Management Act (NFMA).

(a)(4) add this section – "National Scenic (and Historic?) Trails, when administered by the Bureau of Land Management, or lie within or in proximity to BLM managed lands, will have designated management corridors established that encompass the entire length of each national scenic trail, will be of sufficient width, and managed accordingly to provide for the "nature and purposes" of each trail, as per 16 U.S.C. § 1246"

As above for USFS this supports the status of these trails for BLM within the system of management that Congress set up for BLM in the Federal Land and Policy Management Act (FLPMA) and provisions of The National Landscape Conservation System as established by Public Law 111-11 (16 U.S.C. § 7202)

Overall Conceptual

Sec.4(b) Operation –

- 1) Given the desire of some trail organizations to not apply the concept of Designated Operational Partners (DOPs) at all to their trails,
- 2) and given the fact that many trail orgs do not have the capacity at this point to either fulfil the expectations for a DOP or even effectively engage in the discussions about this act,
- 3) and given the fact that other organizations see value in the concept of DOPs and have engaged in discussions of the ATCA with the possibility of seeking DOP status,
- 4) and given concerns regarding the impact of a DOP designation and recission process being at the behest of agency staff and political appointees at or below the Secretarial level who may or may not have the best interests of the NS&HTs understood and/or at heart, I would suggest the following changes in the whole DOP concept and process:

That the NTS Community embrace the concept of Designated Operating Partners for those organizations meeting the qualifications and characteristics described in the current version of the ATCA or who can reasonably be expected to attain those within a reasonable period of time (10 years?), and which desire this designation for their organization.

That the concept of Department/agency designation/recission of DOPs be dropped from ATCA, and instead this designation process would occur through Congress. This would mean deletion of the current wording in (B), and updating the legislation with the proposed language below.

If these recommendations are adopted it will be essential to review the document in its entirety to respecify the term “covered trail” which may then refer to trails with DOPs, or to respecify that particular sections apply to ALL NS&HTs or to ALL NSTs, which would be desirable in my view.

If this change is implemented there is a need to add additional statements (Sec.4(b)(1)(B,C,D, E etc.) to designated DOPs for the PCT, PNT, AZT, etc.

Take the Description of Eligible Entities and Qualifications found currently in Sec.4(b)(1)(B) (ii & iii) and reinsert as necessary qualifications for DOP designation, perhaps as a section directly under Sec.4(b)(1) Designated Operational Partners. In this section replace “stewardship” in (ii)(III), with “management and operations” to match the rest of the bill. And remove the section of (ii)(VII) referring to replacement of DOP by the Secretary.

Specific Wording

Sec. 4(b) Operations

The proposal above would lead to a variety of specific changes in this section including separate sections under Sec.4 (b) (1) that would address the AT as in the current ATCA and allow for additional trail organizations to be added to this section of the bill. (see suggestions in the section above.)

Sec.4(b)(1)(B) would be reworded to reflect congressional intent regarding the characteristics and description of eligible organizations and qualifications for DOP designation by Congress, including sections addressing not supplanting existing trail wide organizations, no competitive process and present-funded activity.

(C) Recission would be dropped in its entirety.

Sec.4(b)(2) Protection of Property Rights would be retained for the AT and discussion should determine whether this is desirable for application for all NPS administered NS&HTs (or just NSTs?). We believe that this section is undesirable for USFS and BLM administered or managed trails and trail segments. It should be made clear in the overall wording of this section that it applies to the federal land managing agency for a section of a trail and not the administering agency of the trail per se.

Specific Wording

Sec. 4(b)(2) Protection of Property Rights

Please reword this section so that it applies to just NPS administered trails or perhaps to the AT only. This can be accomplished by replacing the term “covered trail” in the first sentence with “an NPS administered trail” or “the Appalachian Trail”.

Sec. 4(b)(3) Land and Resource Protection Proposed Priority Lists

(A) first sentence – reword to say: “Each Designated Operational Partner, *in collaboration with the administering agency and specific land managing agencies for portions of each NS&HT*, shall periodically develop...”

Sec. 4(d)(2) – fee system - We think what would be desirable is for this section to say is that, **if** there is a fee system they have to use rulemaking etc., to establish it and the funds go back to the managing agency unit that collects the fees. We believe it is not your intent to **require** establishment of fee systems for all NSHTs but the current language is not as clear as it could be. The current bill language seems to **require** that a fee system **must** be established for all these trails, which may not be desirable or even feasible. This could be remedied in the middle of the section if “...to establish, by regulation...” with the phrase “...if establishing , by regulation...”

Specific Wording

Sec. (4)(e) Availability of Funds

(1)(B) We believe that this refers to the congressionally designated administering agency under NTSA, but the current wording makes no sense. Reword to clearly convey the intention.

(1)(C) Sometimes the trail corridor is on federally managed lands even when the trail itself is not. Add words as follows: “traversed by or *in proximity to*” and perhaps define that term in Definitions.

Sec. (4) (e) contains key language for all NSTs regarding a trail administered by one agency on lands managed by a different agency. Important to retain.

Sec. (4)(f) Cooperative Agreements

Direction regarding terms of Cooperative Agreements is important for all NSTs and should be retained.

Since the USFS uses the term “Trail Administrator” to indicate the full-time employee with overall responsibility for a specific NST or NHT, the use of the term administrator in this section will lead to confusion. I believe that the term administrator in this section of the ATCA bill is meant to indicate the congressionally assigned administering agency. We should use that term. The term administrator is currently found in (f)(1), (f)(2), and (f)(3) and should be changed in each case to “administering agency”.

Specific Wording

Sec.4(g) Comprehensive Plan - Overall this is a critical piece of direction to assure proper management and protection of an NST or NHT and should apply to all of those trails.

(1)(A) I would suggest the following slightly different wording:

“shall be incorporated into the management plans of each federally managed area traversed by, or in proximity to, a national scenic or historic trail. Comprehensive Plan requirements will be addressed in all planning documents with a potential impact on resources for which those trails were designated; and...”

Sec.(4)(g)(2) Incorporation – slightly refines language

“In updating an NPS General Management Plan, a USFS Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan), a BLM Resource Management Plan or any similar unit-level plan applicable to a federally managed and administered area traversed by, or in proximity to, a national scenic or historic trail, Comprehensive Plan direction and sufficient direction to protect resources for which the trail has been designated and the nature and purposes of that trail shall be incorporated.”

Specific Wording

Sec. 5 Improving National Scenic and Historic Trail Planning and Development (delete “Covered”)

- (a) Visitor Capacity Since this is required by the 1978 amendments to the NTSA it applies to all NS&HTs and because we suggest this is not true of all the items below this it should be made explicit by replacing the word “covered” with “each national scenic and historic trail”.

(b) Economic Impact Assessment Because several trail organizations are concerned about the priority of this work and its effect on the other important work of their administering agency, I would suggest that this set of tasks should only apply to trails where the trail organization actually opts into this requirement. For the organizations proposing these changes it would also be possible to have the same effect by revising the language so that it applies to NPS administered trails and not USFS administered trails

(1) In General - The current language here has a requirement and two associated time frames, but the time frames only apply to selecting methodology, not completing the assessment – was this the intent? To have the time frames apply to the actual assessment add “... and complete the assessment.” Is there a reason to limit the economic impact assessment to gateway communities?

(c) Advancing National Scenic and Historic Trail Planning (see revised wording here)

This is another place to address details of incorporation of NS&HT planning in Forest Planning and BLM RMPs and NPS GMPs. We would suggest a series of requirements under (c)(1)(A) or in a new Sec. 5 (2) PLANNING, including:

NPS??????? ATC should write this giving parallel direction for NPS General Management Plans applied to NPS administered trails and NPS units traversed by or in proximity to national scenic trails.

“United States Forest Service – agency will provide Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (FLRMP) direction delineating a Management Area for each National Scenic Trail traversing, or in proximity to, lands managed by the United States Forest Service based on a Visual Management System foreground zone (visible lands within one half mile of the trail tread) with some rare exceptions where trails must cross developed areas. Trail corridors associated with national scenic trails and the high priority potential sites and segments of national historic trails will be of sufficient width to protect natural, scenic, and historic features along the trails, to provide needed public use facilities and be delineated to ensure that the values for which each trail was established remain intact. Management standards and guides will be developed sufficient to protect the federally managed resources for which the trail was designated and the nature and purposes of the trail, and maximize the recreation potential of the trail for public use and enjoyment. This

inclusion of direction will occur when FLRMPs are revised if revision is expected to be complete within 5 years of the passage of this act. If revision is not expected by that time, a FLRMP amendment is required within 5 years of the passage of this act to provide this direction.”

We recognize that it is possible that USFS may bow up against the specificity of the language above. If this is true below is found alternative language that, while not as useful will accomplish at least some of the preferred language above.

“The Secretary of Agriculture will direct the Chief of the Forest Service to develop sufficient management direction for each national scenic trail management corridor.

- (A) Within 5 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Forest Service will develop and adopt management direction in Land and Resource Management Plans for each national scenic trail management corridor. National scenic trail management area direction will include:
 - (i) A clearly delineated geographic corridor around each trail that is generally at least one-half mile on each side of the trail;
 - (ii) Associated land and resource management direction language that sufficiently provides for the “nature and purposes” of each trail as per U.S.C. § 1246.
 - (iii) The trail management areas and associated direction will be referenced and incorporated into each National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan traversed by or in proximity to each national scenic trail.”

We have used the formal term for Forest Plans in the suggested wording above that is actually in the National Forest Management Act to clearly link this requirement to the requirements of that act. It has been suggested that we use language found in the current USFS Planning Rule and Directives as alternative language to that proposed above, but a review of that language, especially the language that specifically applies to NSHTs, seems less strong than the language that we have proposed. We would gladly work to make changes if we thought they would put forward the same strong direction or even stronger direction.

“Bureau of Land Management - agency will provide Resource Management Plan (RMP) direction delineating a Management Corridor for each National Scenic Trail

traversing, or in proximity to, lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management based on a Visual Resource Management (VRM) System foreground zone (visible lands within one half mile of the trail tread) with some rare exceptions where trails must cross developed areas. Trail corridors associated with national scenic trails and the high priority potential sites and segments of national historic trails will be of sufficient width to protect natural, scenic, and historic features along the trails, to provide needed public use facilities and be delineated to ensure that the values for which each trail was established remain intact. Management standards and guides will be developed sufficient to protect the federally managed resources for which the trail was designated and maximize the recreation potential of the trail for public use and enjoyment. This inclusion of direction will occur when RMPs are revised if revision is expected to be complete within 5 years of the passage of this act. If revision is not expected by that time, a RMP amendment is required within 5 years of the passage of this act to provide this direction.”

We recognize that it is possible that BLM may bow up against the specificity of the language above. If this is true, below is found alternative language that, while not as useful, will accomplish at least some of the preferred language above.

“The Secretary of Interior will direct the Director of the Bureau of Land Management to develop sufficient management direction for each national scenic trail management corridor.

- (B) Within 5 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Bureau will develop and adopt management direction in Resource Management Plans for each national scenic trail management corridor. National scenic trail management corridor direction will include:
 - (iv) A clearly delineated geographic corridor around each trail that is generally at least one-half mile on each side of the trail;
 - (v) Associated land and resource management direction language that sufficiently provides for the “nature and purposes” of each trail as per U.S.C. § 1246.
 - (vi) The trail management corridors and associated direction will be referenced and incorporated into each Resource Management Plan traversed by or in proximity to each national scenic trail.”

(c)(1)(B) replace the phrase proposed in the existing language here:

Replace "...as appropriate for covered trails..."

With: "...as appropriate for *national scenic and historic trails are also long term, ongoing processes and* are needed to advance the purposes..."

(2) Reports

(2)(A) at the end of this statement: "...developing and planning *National Scenic and Historic Trails, including information concerning progress on completion of planning direction required in Section 5(c)(1) of this act.*"

Sec. 5(d) Exemption from FACA – This is an important part of the legislation and should be retained. If there is push back on how broad the exemption is it should at least cover the work between DOPs and administering and managing agencies.

Specific Wording

Sec.5(e) Authorization of Appropriations – one edit

(e)(2) "...determined to be appropriate by the Secretary *or the Secretary of Agriculture,...*" (not both and not the Sec of Interior twice)

From: [Jennifer Duffy](#)
To: [fortherecord \(Energy\)](#); [Teeqarden, Tori \(Barrasso\)](#); [Walker, Lahra \(Daines\)](#); [Harbin, Christine \(Cassidy\)](#); [Burks, Jen \(Hirono\)](#); [Plath, Savannah \(Gallego\)](#); [Gustafson, Eric \(Hoeven\)](#); [Chitre, Jui \(Kaine\)](#)
Subject: S.1377 — The Theodore Roosevelt National Park Wild Horse Protection Act
Date: Wednesday, December 17, 2025 4:21:11 PM

Dear Senators,

I urge you to support S.1377 with the amendments submitted by Chasing Horses Wild Horse Advocates. These amendments ensure genetic viability, protect all 200 current horses, and establish a collaborative working group for responsible management.

- **Change “genetically diverse” to “genetically viable.”**
This ensures a healthy, sustainable herd long-term.
- **Set herd size to “not fewer than 200” horses.**
This protects every horse currently living in the park.
- **Create a Wild Horse Working Group** with our allies at Chasing Horses Wild Horse Advocates to bring science, history, commerce, and advocacy together while filling major staffing gaps and strengthening community relations.

These amendments are already in Senators’ hands.

Thank you for supporting the wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park and Happy Holidays to you and yours.

Sincerely,
Jenny Duffy
6125 Victory Dr, Ave Maria, FL 34142
jenny.duffy55@gmail.com

From: [Tammy Englehardt](#)
To: [fortherecord \(Enerov\)](#); [Teegarden, Tori \(Barrasso\)](#); [Walker, Lahra \(Daines\)](#); [Harbin, Christine \(Cassidy\)](#); [Chitre, Jui \(Kaine\)](#); [Burks, Jen \(Hirono\)](#); [Plath, Savannah \(Gallego\)](#); [Gustafson, Eric \(Hoeven\)](#)
Subject: Please Support S.1377 with Essential Amendments
Date: Tuesday, December 16, 2025 6:25:15 PM

Dear elected official,

I urge you to support S.1377 with the amendments submitted by Chasing Horses Wild Horse Advocates. These amendments ensure genetic viability, protect all 200 current horses, and establish a collaborative working group for responsible management.

Thank you for supporting the wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

Sincerely,
Tammy Englehardt
8832 Avenida Castro
Rancho Cucamonga, CA
91730
misstaminion@gmail.com

From: [Dianne Ensign](#)
To: [fortherecord \(Enerov\)](#); [Teeqarden, Tori \(Barrasso\)](#); [Walker, Lahra \(Daines\)](#); [Harbin, Christine \(Cassidy\)](#); [Burks, Jen \(Hirono\)](#); [Plath, Savannah \(Gallego\)](#); [Gustafson, Eric \(Hoeven\)](#); [Chitre, Jui \(Kaine\)](#)
Subject: Please Support S.1377 with Essential Amendments
Date: Wednesday, December 17, 2025 5:16:31 PM

Dear Elected Officials,

I urge you to support S.1377 with the amendments submitted by Chasing Horses Wild Horse Advocates. These amendments ensure genetic viability, protect all 200 current horses, and establish a collaborative working group for responsible management.

Thank you for supporting the wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

Sincerely,

*Dianne Ensign
11600 SW Lancaster Rd.
Portland, OR 97219
roughskinnednewt@hotmail.com*

From: susan204@aol.com
To: [fortherecord \(Enerov\)](#); [Teegarden, Tori \(Barrasso\)](#); [Walker, Lahra \(Daines\)](#); [Harbin, Christine \(Cassidy\)](#); [Burks, Jen \(Hirono\)](#); [Plath, Savannah \(Gallego\)](#); [Gustafson, Eric \(Hoeven\)](#); [Chitre, Jui \(Kaine\)](#)
Date: Tuesday, December 16, 2025 7:00:58 PM

I urge you to support S.1377 with the amendments submitted by Chasing Horses Wild Horse Advocates. These amendments ensure genetic viability, protect all 200 current horses, and establish a collaborative working group for responsible management.

Thank you for supporting the wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

Susan Esposito
6 Belfield Ave
Staten Island NY 10312

Sent from [AOL Desktop](#)

Do not pity a shelter animal, adopt one
Those in need are my favorite breed

From: [Mark M Giese](#)
To: [fortherecord \(Enerov\)](#); [Teegarden, Tori \(Barrasso\)](#); [Walker, Lahra \(Daines\)](#); [Harbin, Christine \(Cassidy\)](#); [Burks, Jen \(Hirono\)](#); [Plath, Savannah \(Gallego\)](#); [Gustafson, Eric \(Hoeven\)](#); [Chitre, Jui \(Kaine\)](#)
Subject: Please Support S.1377 with Essential Amendments
Date: Tuesday, December 16, 2025 10:00:52 PM

I urge you to support S.1377 with the amendments submitted by Chasing Horses Wild Horse Advocates. These amendments ensure genetic viability, protect all 200 current horses, and establish a collaborative working group for responsible management.

Thank you for supporting the wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

Sincerely,
Mark M Giese
1520 Bryn Mawr Ave
Racine, WI 53403
USA

HAMILTON PARTNERSHIP *for Paterson*

Hon. Frank Pallone
2107 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Sen. Andy Kim
520 Hart SOB
Washington, D.C. 20510

December 12, 2025

Dear Congressman Pallone and Senator Kim,

On behalf of the Hamilton Partnership for Paterson, I want to express our deep appreciation for your commitment to the Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park and to the community it serves. As you know, none of the progress we see today would have been possible without the vision and persistence of Congressman Bill Pascrell, Jr. His decades-long dedication to securing national recognition for the Great Falls and uplifting Paterson's place in America's industrial history laid the groundwork for all that has followed. Naming key areas of the Park in his honor is a fitting tribute to someone who never stopped championing his hometown and our Park.

The momentum at the Great Falls is undeniable. With strong collaboration from the National Park Service, the State of New Jersey, the City of Paterson, and our partners and supporters, the Park has undergone transformational improvements. The Quarry Lawn, the restored pedestrian bridge, the enhancements to Overlook Park and Mary Ellen Kramer Park, and the ongoing raceway restoration and Visitor Center planning all reflect a shared commitment to building an experience that welcomes visitors, supports economic opportunity, and tells Paterson's extraordinary story with depth and authenticity while visitation continues to climb as these investments take shape.

We are hopeful that the related legislation recognizing Congressman Pascrell's legacy will advance in the Senate soon, given its broad support at every level. It is heartening to see such unity around honoring someone who played such an essential role in establishing our Park. Thank you again for your support of the Paterson Great Falls and for your partnership in strengthening one of New Jersey's most important historic assets. We look forward to continuing this work together.

With appreciation,
Stephanie L. Cullins, Executive Director
Hamilton Partnership for Paterson

From: [Jill Heins](#)
To: [fortherecord \(Energy\)](#); [Teeqarden, Tori \(Barrasso\)](#); [Walker, Lahra \(Daines\)](#); [Harbin, Christine \(Cassidy\)](#); [Burks, Jen \(Hirono\)](#); [Plath, Savannah \(Gallego\)](#); [Gustafson, Eric \(Hoeven\)](#); [Chitre, Jui \(Kaine\)](#)
Subject: S.1377 Concerns
Date: Tuesday, December 16, 2025 6:13:43 PM

I'm writing regarding S.1377 which is heading into markup Wednesday. This is the single most critical moment for this herd in decades. Please include three amendments that will determine whether this herd survives:

- **Change "genetically diverse" to "genetically viable."**
This ensures a healthy and long-term sustainable herd.
- **Set herd size to "not fewer than 200" horses.**
This protects every horse currently living in the park.
- **Create a Wild Horse Working Group** with our allies at Chasing Horses Wild Horse Advocates to bring science, history, and commerce together while filling staffing gaps and strengthening community relations.

I hope you'll do what you can to protect these equines.

Sincerely,

Jill M. Heins
 32583 Hanna Avenue
 Warsaw, MO 65355
jilheins@gmail.com

Testimony from Luke Kloberdanz
Executive Director and CEO of the Ice Age Trail Alliance
S. 2708, the Appalachian Trail Centennial Act



Chair Daines, Ranking Member King, and Members of the Subcommittee:

I write to you on behalf of the Ice Age Trail Alliance, the nonprofit partner responsible for conserving, creating, maintaining, and promoting the Ice Age National Scenic Trail in Wisconsin.

The Ice Age National Scenic Trail (IANST) became part of the National Trails System in 1980. Since that time, its success has depended on a unique partnership and long-standing Cooperative Agreement between the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the National Park Service, and the Ice Age Trail Alliance. Together, we manage a 1,200-mile resource of national significance highlighting the last glacial episode and the corridor that surrounds it.

The Alliance is powered by nearly 2,000 volunteers organized into 19 local chapters across the state. In fiscal year 2025 alone, these volunteers contributed more than 114,000 hours to trailbuilding, land stewardship, and community engagement—work that, on other federal projects, is generally carried out by federal employees. This volunteer dedication helps support the 4.65 million people who use the Ice Age Trail each year and the Trail's \$820 million annual economic impact to Wisconsin (according to a 2023 study conducted by the University of Wisconsin–Whitewater's Fiscal and Economic Research Center).

The Ice Age Trail Alliance appreciates and supports many of the concepts set forth in S. 2708. We applaud the sponsor's intent to recognize and strengthen the essential role of nonprofit trail partners and to clarify authorities in the National Trails System Act. We particularly support the bill's definition and recognition of Designated Operating Partners (Sec. 4(b)(1)), a concept which accurately reflects how many national scenic trails are managed today. We respectfully request the Ice Age Trail Alliance be explicitly named as a Designated Operating Partner within the legislation—just as the Appalachian Trail Conservancy is—given our decades of cooperative management experience and our essential role in daily Trail operations. Furthermore, as a Designated Operating Partner, we seek the clear authority and flexibility to work with partners and other collaborators as we determine necessary to advance our shared goal: a fully connected, complete Ice Age National Scenic Trail.

We also welcome the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's leadership in championing this legislation and appreciate the opportunity for all scenic and historic trail organizations to participate meaningfully in future refinements of it.

Prioritizing Land Protection

A complete and permanently protected corridor is fundamental to the purpose of a national

PO Box 128
 2110 Main Street
 Cross Plains, WI 53528
 608.798.4453
iceagetrail.org





scenic trail. For the Ice Age National Scenic Trail, land protection is the single most important factor in completing the Trail. Today, 711.5 miles of the Trail are protected and open to public use, leaving more than 500 miles to complete.

This is why the Alliance particularly supports the Land and Resource Protection Proposed Priority Lists (Sec.4(b)(3)) set forth in the legislation. This provision elevates land protection as a priority. It also empowers the people most familiar with the landscape to identify the properties critical to completion of the trail. The requirement for regular progress reports to Congress (Sec. 4(b)(3)(F)) will help to keep the work toward completion on track.

Implementation and Practicality

The Alliance has concerns regarding the feasibility of certain reporting and timing requirements regarding visitor capacity and economic impact (Sec. 5(a) and (b)). To ensure success, the legislation would benefit from realistic, actionable timelines developed in consultation with federal partners and trail-managing nonprofits. Some of the processes set forth in the legislation formalize work already being done by trail organizations; therefore, legislators are encouraged to ensure new mandates do not unintentionally divert capacity away from on-the-ground trail completion and stewardship.

A Needed Update of the National Trails System Act

S. 2708 is an important and much-needed clarification of authorities of the National Trails System Act pertaining to the actual day-to-day development and functioning of the national scenic and historic trails. It offers an opportunity to reinvigorate federal agency engagement and reaffirm the shared responsibility of agencies, states, and nonprofit partners.

Thank you for your support of our nation's trails. The Ice Age Trail Alliance is committed to working with Congress, federal agencies, and fellow trail organizations to ensure this legislation is visionary and workable—advancing the completion, protection, and stewardship of the Ice Age National Scenic Trail and the entire National Trails System.

Respectfully,

Luke Kloberdanz
Executive Director and CEO,
Ice Age Trail Alliance, Inc.

From: [Question Everything](#)
To: [fortherecord \(Enerov\)](#); [Chitre, Jui \(Kaine\)](#); [Gustafson, Eric \(Hoeven\)](#); [Plath, Savannah \(Gallego\)](#); [Burks, Jen \(Hirono\)](#); [Harbin, Christine \(Cassidy\)](#); [Teegarden, Ton \(Barrasso\)](#); [Walker, Lahra \(Daines\)](#)
Subject: Roosevelt National Park wild horses
Date: Tuesday, December 16, 2025 4:57:22 PM

Dear elected official,
I urge you to support S.1377 with the amendments submitted by Chasing Horses Wild Horse Advocates. These amendments ensure genetic viability, protect all 200 current horses, and establish a collaborative working group for responsible management.
Thank you for supporting the wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

Sincerely,
Eva Jones
421 Worcester Rd
NEW BRAINTREE MA 01531
evatazman421@gmail.com

**U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
Subcommittee on National Parks
Written Testimony by U.S. Senator Jim Justice (WV)**

December 9, 2025

Chair Daines, Co-Chair King, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee:

It is an honor to write in support of S.858, the *Hershel “Woody” Williams National Medal of Honor Monument Location Act*. This bill gives our nation’s Medal of Honor recipients the recognition they so rightly deserve. It, quite simply, identifies the location of a National Medal of Honor monument to be placed on the National Mall right here in Washington.

This bill is the Senate companion to H.R.186, which passed the House *unanimously* in January 414-0. It is now our job in the Senate to make sure that this no-brainer piece of legislation to honor Americans who have sacrificed everything for our country gets done.

The Medal of Honor embodies the highest level of bravery and sacrifice in combat. A monument celebrating all Medal of Honor recipients *absolutely* deserves a place on the National Mall alongside our country’s most important monuments and memorials. Erecting a monument dedicated to the Medal of Honor recipients is a tangible expression of gratitude and respect for America’s finest soldiers who have gone above and beyond the call of duty to defend our nation. It reflects the American people’s collective appreciation for their bravery and stands as a lasting tribute to their legacy for all who visit the National Mall to honor and celebrate.

Time is truly of the essence with this bill. In just the past year, we’ve lost several more Medal of Honor recipients, including Colonel Ralph Puckett, who was the last surviving recipient from the Korean War. The bill’s namesake, West Virginia native Woody Williams, passed away in 2022 and was the last surviving recipient from World War II. While there are several living Medal of Honor recipients, the window of opportunity to properly honor the legacy of the award and its surviving recipients with a meaningful location on the National Mall diminishes each year.

Let me be clear—this monument will come at *no cost* to the taxpayer. The great folks at the National Medal of Honor Museum Foundation have assured us that it will fully be funded through private donations.

Many people and organizations have expressed support for this legislation. I am grateful to be joined in this bipartisan effort by 12 Senate cosponsors, including five of my colleagues on the ENR Committee. The National Medal of Honor Museum Foundation has been a great champion as well. The National Congress of American Indians has also adopted a resolution in support of this bill and the recipients it would honor, 32 of whom are Native American. I am thankful that so many recognize the need to honor the Medal of Honor recipients and the extraordinary sacrifices they have made for this country and its citizens.

The time to get this done is now. We must do our part in the Senate and send this bill to the President's desk. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation and honoring those who have sacrificed so much for our country.

**Written Statement of
Raya Kenney, Executive Director, World War II Women's Memorial Foundation
Testimony on S.1088, the WWII Women's Memorial Location Act
Senate Energy and Natural Resources Subcommittee on National Parks
December 9, 2025**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of [S.1088/H.R.2290](#), the World War II Women's Memorial Location Act. My name is Raya Kenney, and I am the Executive Director of the World War II Women's Memorial Foundation. Our mission is to establish a monument to honor the service and sacrifice of the more than 18 million American women who worked on the home front during WWII.

This initiative began more than a decade ago with a 5th grade school project. My teacher asked my class to build a model monument dedicated to someone or something not yet commemorated in Washington, D.C. I had just seen *A League of Their Own*, a film about women who "stepped up to the plate" to keep baseball in American lives during WWII, and was inspired to learn more about America's "Rosies" and dedicate my school project to them.

As I researched the role of American women in WWII, I discovered that more than 18 million women answered the call to hold down the home front by entering more than 80 different fields and working as codebreakers, pilots, engineers, electricians, mechanics, lumberjacks, postal carriers, and even taxi drivers. These women transformed the American workforce; between 1940 and 1945, American women jumped from 27 to almost 40 percent of American workers. Importantly, these women served as the backbone of the war effort and many directly contributed to the Allied victory by building planes, tanks, munitions, and other equipment needed by American troops. As General Eisenhower said, "The contribution of the women of America, whether on the farm or in the factory or in uniform, to D-Day was a sine qua non of the invasion effort."

So, at ten years old, I built a model monument using wood, concrete, fake grass, and a silver pen. My teacher then encouraged me to pursue the Memorial for real. I took her suggestion seriously and what followed has been more than a decade of advocacy with the National Park Service, Congress, and other stakeholders. In 2022, Congress authorized my Foundation to establish the Memorial in Washington, D.C.¹

The next step was to assess the most appropriate location for the Memorial within our nation's capital. During the initial authorization process, the National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission (NCMAC) advised Congress that "in order to thematically connect [the Memorial] with other memorials commemorating that era, the Foundation may eventually

¹ [Pub. L. No. 117-328](#).

consider sites located in Area I.”² After receiving initial congressional authorization, we worked with a consultant to conduct a preliminary site-selection study, and we found that the locations with the strongest thematic and historical nexus are adjacent to the WWII Memorial or slightly northwest of the WWII Memorial in Constitution Gardens, where the so-called “Government Girls” worked in temporary munitions buildings during the war. Both of these sites are in the Reserve.

Without congressional action, the National Park Service and other entities involved in the site-selection process cannot even begin to formally consider these locations for the Memorial. That is why we seek your support for [S.1088](#) to make the Memorial eligible to be built within Area I or the Reserve.

The bipartisan, bicameral legislation before you today was introduced earlier this year, passed unanimously out of the House Committee on Natural Resources this July, and is scheduled for a House floor vote this very afternoon. We are grateful to our original Senate cosponsors, Senators Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), Marsha Blackburn (R-TN), and Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), as well as our more than 40 cosponsors across both chambers, for their determination to help complete the story of WWII on the Mall.

In addition to our congressional champions, this legislation is supported by: The American Legion; American Rosie the Riveter Association; Rosie the Riveter Trust; Honor Rosie; Best Defense Foundation; and Women Veterans Alliance.

The Memorial honoring the service and sacrifice of the millions of American women of WWII should be dedicated within walking distance of the WWII Memorial. After all, the Vietnam Women’s Memorial was dedicated mere yards away from the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. The memorial to the women of WWII should similarly be placed near the WWII Memorial.

I should also mention that, while the official design phase comes later in the process, we currently contemplate that the Memorial would be relatively small in size—less than one-quarter of an acre, low to the ground, and unobtrusive to the natural landscape.³ Small—but powerful.

Congress should act swiftly to enact this legislation. Many of our Rosies are celebrating their centennial birthdays and beyond. We must honor their contributions to America and not allow their stories to be lost to time. Today, as we commemorate the 80th anniversary of the Allied victory in WWII and near the 250th birthday of this great nation, we

² Letter from the Nat’l Cap. Mem’l Advisory Comm’n to Raúl Grijalva, Chairman, U.S. House of Rep. Comm. on Nat. Res. (Mar. 20, 2020) (on file with author); see also S. REP. NO. 117-189, at 2 (2022) (discussing NCMAC consideration and NPS support of the Memorial).

³ There are approximately 700 acres of green space in the Reserve, and we are seeking 0.04% of that to honor the more than 18 million American Rosies.

should ensure that the service and sacrifice of the Rosies are eternally etched into our collective memory.

Thank you for considering this legislation to ensure the Memorial finds the best home. I also want to thank the Rosies for allowing me to help them share and preserve their place in history. If there's one thing I've learned from these women, it's that when we work together, **we can do it!**

From: [Jussi Kivimäki](#)
To: [fortherecord \(Energy\)](#)
Subject: Please Support S.1377 with Essential Amendments
Date: Tuesday, December 16, 2025 6:33:05 PM

Dear U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources,

I urge you to support S.1377 with the amendments submitted by Chasing Horses Wild Horse Advocates. These amendments ensure genetic viability, protect all 200 current horses, and establish a collaborative working group for responsible management.

Thank you for supporting the wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

Sincerely,
Jussi Kivimäki
Fredikanterassi 3 C 121, 00520 Helsinki, Finland
kivimaki.j.e@gmail.com

From: [Chasing Horses Wild Horse Advocates](#)
To: [fortherecord \(Energy\)](#)
Subject: S1377
Date: Wednesday, December 3, 2025 12:57:11 PM

My name is Christine Kman. I am the president of Chasing Horses Wild Horse Advocates. We are a nonprofit organization in Southwestern North Dakota that advocates for the wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

I am writing to you today in reference to S1377 - The Theodore Roosevelt National Park Wild Horse Protection Act. We are requesting this legislation be amended as noted below.

Please let me know if you need any additional information from me to make this request to the committee before they hear testimony next week.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
 Christine Kman
 Chasing Horses Wild Horse Advocates
www.chwha.org

S. 1377

To ensure the maintenance of a herd of horses in Theodore Roosevelt National Park, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

April 9, 2025

Mr. Hoeven (for himself and Mr. Kaine) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

A BILL

To ensure the maintenance of a herd of horses in Theodore Roosevelt National Park, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. Short title.

This Act may be cited as the "Theodore Roosevelt National Park Wild Horses Protection Act".

SEC. 2. Maintenance of horses in Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

Section 5 of the Act of April 25, 1947 (61 Stat. 54, chapter 41; [16 U.S.C. 245](#)), is amended—

(1) by striking the section designation and all that follows through "The Administration" and inserting the following:

“SEC. 5. Administration, protection, and development.

“(a) In general.—The administration”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following:

“(b) Maintenance of horses.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Interior (referred to in this subsection as the ‘Secretary’) shall maintain a genetically viable herd of horses in the South Unit of Theodore Roosevelt National Park (referred to in this subsection as the ‘Park’), with a population of not fewer than 150-200 horses that are native to the park.

“(2) Within 180 days after enactment of this subsection, the Secretary shall enter into an agreement with the Chasing Horses Wild Horse Advocates (a nonprofit corporation established under the laws of the State of North Dakota), to create a wild horse working group made up of community members with backgrounds in science, history, commerce and advocacy. The purpose of this group is to provide for management of free roaming horses in the park.

The agreement shall—

“(A) provide for cost-effective management of the horses while ensuring that natural resources within the park are not adversely impacted; and

“(B) allow the authorized entity to facilitate the adoption any of those horses that the Secretary removes from the park; and

(C) work on the best practices for administration of fertility control that allows for a genetically viable herd of horses

“(3) The Secretary shall not remove, assist in, or permit the removal of any free roaming horses from Federal lands within the boundaries of the park —

(A) unless the entity with whom the Secretary has entered into the agreement under paragraph (2), following notice and a 90-day response period, fails to meet the terms and conditions of the agreement; or

(B) unless the number of free roaming horses on Federal lands within Theodore Roosevelt National Park exceeds 200; or

(C) except in the case of an emergency, or to protect public health and safety.

“(4) Not later than 120 days after the date of enactment of this subsection, the Secretary shall work with the working group listed above to begin the process of developing a plan to provide for the management of horses in the Park.

(A) REQUIREMENTS.—The plan developed shall provide for the cost-effective management of the horses in the Park while ensuring that natural resources within the Park are not adversely impacted.

(B) A new wild horse management plan shall be completed every 10 years, or when science gives new tools the park plans to use to manage the herd – whichever comes first.

“(5) MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT.— The Secretary shall annually monitor, assess, and make available to the public findings regarding the population, structure, and health of the horses in the Park.”.

“(6) EXPERIMENTATION – The Secretary shall cease any further experimentation or research on the

wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

John A. Lawrence, Ph.D.
500 N. 21st Street, Apt. 420
Philadelphia, PA 19130
(202) 821-2378
jal221B@gmail.com

December 10, 2025

Hon. Frank Pallone
2107 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Sen. Andy Kim
520 Hart SOB
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Congressman Pallone and Senator Kim,

As a native of Paterson and longtime congressional staff who worked on legislation creating and improving our national parks and other public lands, I salute your support for enactment of H.R. 249 that would honor the legacy of Congressman and former mayor Bill Pascrell, Jr., -- "just a Paterson guy," as he described himself -- by naming Overlook Park and the Trail Bridge at the Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park in his honor.

As you know, no one played a most consequential role in the long effort to designate the Paterson Great Falls and the surrounding historical features a part of the National Park system than our friend, Bill. Historians and those of us who grew up in Paterson recognize the great significance of the city in the emergence of the modern urban-industrial system that transformed America and the world in the 19th century. Indeed, the city founded by Alexander Hamilton is appropriately recognized as the first planned industrial city in the United States, and for that reason, Congress created the National Historic Park in 2009.

Improvements to the Park have continued at a rapid pace with the strong support of the National Park Service, the State of New Jersey, the city of Paterson under the leadership of Mayor André Sayegh, and the friends group of which I am a board member, the Hamilton Partnership for Paterson. The outstanding commitment and expertise by Park Superintendent Darren Boch have been of extraordinary value. Visitation has increased very substantially as well. The recently completed Quarry Lawn overview, the replacement of the pedestrian bridge over the Falls, the additions to Overlook Park and Mary Ellen Kramer park

and the anticipated restoration of portions of the raceway, as well as the planning for the state-of-the-art Visitor Center all speak to the great interest in creating a visitation experience that will be both educational and will promote economic development in Paterson.

H.R. 249, as you are aware, passed the House by an overwhelming bipartisan vote on May 13, 2025 and was the subject of hearings by the Senate Subcommittee on National Parks on December 9, 2025. The broad support for this legislation – in Paterson, in New Jersey and in the House – all speak to the importance of the bill being scheduled for floor consideration in the Senate at the earliest date possible.

In addition to being a native Patersonian who deeply appreciates the singular role played by Bill Pascrell in the creation and development of the Great Falls NHP, I have a long history in public lands issues. I served as Democratic staff director of the House Committee on Natural Resources from 1993 to 2001 under Chairman and Ranking Member George Miller (D-CA) where I worked extensively on parks issues, particularly those with strong historical themes. My professional training, which includes a Ph.D. in American history and two books on recent congressional history, proved a valuable background for this work.

Again, I know that the support for the Paterson Great Falls NHP reaches far afield from the Silk City itself, and I, like many others, am grateful for your continued enthusiasm for this important historic site. All supporters will celebrate the Senate's passage of H.R. 249 at the earliest opportunity, and I thank you again for your support.

With best wishes,

John A. Lawrence

From: [Gina Lineberger](#)
To: [fortherecord \(Energy\)](#)
Subject: Please Support S.1377 with Essential Amendments
Date: Tuesday, December 16, 2025 7:57:54 PM

Hello,

I urge you to support S.1377 with the amendments submitted by Chasing Horses Wild Horse Advocates. These amendments ensure genetic viability, protect all 200 current horses, and establish a collaborative working group for responsible management.
Thank you for supporting the wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

Sincerely,

Gina Lynn Macaruso Lineberger
8040 E Flying Z Ln
Floral City, FL 34436
gmacline@me.com

From: [Marie Marinakis](#)
To: [fortherecord \(Enerov\)](#); [Teegarden, Tori \(Barrasso\)](#); [Walker, Lahra \(Daines\)](#); [Harbin, Christine \(Cassidy\)](#); [Burks, Jen \(Hirono\)](#); [Plath, Savannah \(Galleo\)](#); [Gustafson, Eric \(Hoeven\)](#); [Chitre, Jui \(Kaine\)](#)
Subject: S.1377 The Theodore Roosevelt National Park Wild Horse Protection Act
Date: Tuesday, December 16, 2025 8:01:46 PM

Dear Senators,

I urge you to support S.1377 with the following amendments submitted by Chasing Horses Wild Horse Advocates.

- **Change “genetically diverse” to “genetically viable.”**
This ensures a healthy, sustainable herd long-term.
- **Set herd size to “not fewer than 200” horses.**
This protects every horse currently living in the park.
- **Create a Wild Horse Working Group** with our allies at Chasing Horses Wild Horse Advocates to bring science, history, commerce, and advocacy together while filling major staffing gaps and strengthening community relations.

These amendments ensure genetic viability, protect all 200 current horses, and establish a collaborative working group for responsible management. This is the most critical moment for this herd in decades - their fate and their lives are in your hands.

Thank you for supporting the wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

Sincerely,

Marie A. Marinakis
6026 Goshen Road
Newtown Square, PA 19073
Email: mariem6026@gmail.com

From: [Ted Martin](#)
To: [fortherecord \(Energy\)](#)
Cc: [Aves Thompson](#)
Subject: 2nd Infantry Division Memorial (extension to complete modifications)
Date: Saturday, December 6, 2025 8:51:50 PM

The 2nd Division Memorial Modification Project
The Second Indianhead Division Memorial Foundation 501(C)(3) EIN 47-2434277

Members
Energy and Natural Resources Committee
United State Senate

*re: S-1353, EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY FOR MODIFICATIONS TO SECOND DIVISION
MEMORIAL*

Dear ENR Members,

The 2nd Infantry Division Memorial, established in 1936 and located on the Mall at 17th and Constitution, NW, Washington, DC, honors the fallen warriors of the US Army's 2nd Infantry Division from World War I. After the Korean War, the Memorial was updated to include those who lost their lives during World War II and those who served in Korea. Section 352 of the NDAA 2018 authorized the 2nd Indianhead Division Memorial Foundation to modify the Memorial. This authorization expired in December 2024. **We are requesting a no-cost extension of seven years to complete the modifications** and raise the funds to do so. This extension will ensure that we honor the American and Korean soldiers of the 2nd Infantry Division who sacrificed their lives in the defense of freedom during the armistice period and the lesser-known DMZ War from the late 1960s to 1991. Modifications will include acknowledgement of 2ID Fallen Warriors in Afghanistan and Iraq.

We ask that you and your colleagues support S-1353, extending the 2ID Memorials Foundation's authorization.

Respectfully,

Theodore D. Martin

LTG, United States Army, Retired
2ID Memorials Foundation, Board Member
703-209-5588
www.2IDMemorialsfoundation.org

From: [Barry Miner](#)
To: [fortherecord \(Energy\)](#)
Cc: [Robinson, Matthew \(Murkowski\)](#); [Ayes Thompson](#); [Hughes, Brian \(Murkowski\)](#); [Barry Miner](#)
Subject: Re: S-1353, EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY FOR MODIFICATIONS TO SECOND DIVISION MEMORIAL
Date: Monday, December 8, 2025 5:39:22 PM

The 2nd Division Memorial Modification Project
The Second Indianhead Division Memorial Foundation 501(C)(3) EIN 47-2434277

Members

Energy and Natural Resources Committee
United States Senate

Re: S-1353, EXTENSION OF AUTHORITY FOR MODIFICATIONS TO SECOND DIVISION MEMORIAL

Dear ENR Committee Members,

The 2nd Infantry Division Memorial, established in 1936 and located on the Mall at 17th and Constitution, NW, Washington, DC, honors the fallen warriors of the US Army's 2nd Infantry Division from World War I. After the Korean War, the Memorial was updated to include those who lost their lives during World War II and those who served and perished in Korea, during the Korean War. Section 352 of the NDAA 2018 authorized the 2nd Indianhead Division Memorial Foundation to modify the Memorial. This authorization expired in December 2024. **We are requesting a no-cost extension of seven years to complete the modifications** and raise the funds to do so. This extension will **ensure that we honor the many American and Korean soldiers of the 2nd Infantry Division who sacrificed their lives in the defense of freedom during the armistice period and the lesser-known DMZ War from the late 1960s to 1991. Modifications will also include acknowledgement of 2ID Fallen Warriors in Afghanistan and Iraq.**

We ask that you and your colleagues support S-1353, extending the 2ID Memorials Foundation's authorization.

Respectfully,

Barry D. Miner

Colonel, United States Army, Retired
Executive Secretary, 2ID Memorials Foundation

703-201-0412

www.2IDMemorialsfoundation.org

Barry D. Miner

703-201-0412 Cell

*When sending email, use: barry@vanguard6.com
as primary email address for Barry*

**Statement for the Record
Submitted by Chris Cassidy
President & Chief Executive Officer
National Medal of Honor Museum Foundation
Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
Subcommittee on National Parks
Legislative Hearing on S.858
December 9, 2025**

Chairman Daines, Ranking Member King, and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for holding this important hearing to consider S.858, the National Medal of Honor Monument Location Act. On behalf of the National Medal of Honor Museum Foundation, our Board of Directors, the living Medal of Honor recipients who advise and guide us, and the countless Americans who support this mission, I offer our profound gratitude for your time and attention.

The National Medal of Honor Monument is the final pillar of a national initiative that began over six years ago. Since then, the Foundation has opened the National Medal of Honor Museum in Arlington, Texas, and launched the Medal of Honor Griffin Institute for character-based leadership education. Both are fully operational and privately funded, and both serve the country by preserving and projecting the stories and values of America's bravest heroes.

The Monument is the last piece. It is modest in scale but profound in purpose. It would stand not in competition with the other monuments of the National Mall, but in complement to them. Positioned near the Lincoln Memorial, the Monument would be additive, not only to Lincoln's legacy but to those who served and sacrificed in every American conflict memorialized nearby. The values embodied by the Medal of Honor are timeless, and the Monument would ensure they are never forgotten.

Our nation has only 61 living Medal of Honor recipients today. That number will, inevitably, continue to decline. It is precisely because we are losing these extraordinary Americans that the Monument must move forward now. These men do not seek recognition for themselves. They seek to ensure that the values they upheld—courage, sacrifice, patriotism, and integrity—continue to inspire future generations.

The Foundation has worked in good faith with the National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission, the National Park Service, and this Committee for over six years to address any and all concerns regarding this project. We have engaged broadly, listened carefully, and responded respectfully. We are proud that the Park Service supports this effort. We are grateful that the House of Representatives passed this legislation unanimously not once, but twice, including this year's vote on H.R. 186 by 414–0. We are honored that the National Congress of American Indians recently adopted a formal resolution in support of the bill.

And now, we are hopeful that the Senate will act swiftly. We do not ask for special treatment. We ask for the same consideration that has been given to other monuments of similar national significance. Congress has previously provided exceptions to the Commemorative Works Act for projects that deserved a place of prominence on the National Mall, including the World War II Memorial, the National Museum of African American History and Culture, and the Global War on Terrorism Memorial, and others. The Medal of Honor Monument deserves to join that lineage, not as a partisan or political statement, but as a unifying national tribute.

In closing, I want to thank each of you for your service and your stewardship of the National Mall. This is a unique moment; one in which the Senate has the chance to complete a mission that transcends politics

and generations. We urge swift passage of S.858, and we stand ready to support this Committee and the full Senate in any way necessary to help bring this vision to life.

Respectfully,

Captain Chris Cassidy, U.S. Navy (Ret.)
President & Chief Executive Officer
National Medal of Honor Museum Foundation



NPCA Positions on Legislation before the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

December 8, 2025

Dear Senator,

Since 1919, the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) has been the leading voice of the American people in protecting and enhancing our National Park System. On behalf of our 1.9 million members and supporters nationwide, we write to share our thoughts on select legislation ahead of a hearing in the Committee on Energy & Natural Resources National Park Subcommittee scheduled for December 9, 2025.

S. 446 - To prohibit Big Cypress National Preserve from being designated as wilderness: NPCA **opposes** this legislation which would prevent the National Park Service (NPS) from carrying out well-established mandates in accordance with the Wilderness Act and longstanding policy. NPCA views wilderness as a valuable conservation tool for protecting some of the most sensitive areas for imperiled wildlife and habitats. We believe the habitat conservation situation in Big Cypress has become dire, and that designating parts of the preserve as wilderness is one of the pathways to better protect the preserve's threatened habitat and wildlife. Oil and gas operations and rampant off-road vehicle use have wreaked havoc across the preserve and threatened its rare species and rich biodiversity.

However, NPCA does not and would not support any potential wilderness designation that violates the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida or Seminole Tribe of Florida's rights to access and live in the Preserve. Tribal rights to customary and traditional use and access are established in the enabling legislation that founded Big Cypress and must be upheld. We have a deep and abiding respect for both Tribal Nations and the unique cultural connection they have with this land. NPS can and should continue its work with the Tribes through meaningful government-to-government consultation to honor Tribal interests. Any potential wilderness designation must protect Big Cypress' ecosystems while simultaneously protecting Tribal rights and access to the land they have stewarded for generations. NPCA is committed to working together to find and apply conservation tools and solutions to protect Big Cypress.

S. 573 - To designate a mountain in the State of Alaska as Denali: NPCA **supports** this legislation to designate a mountain in the state of Alaska as Denali. The name "Denali" stems from "deenaalee," which is from the Koyukon language traditionally spoken by some Alaska Natives on the north side of Denali National Park. It is a recognition of the historical place of indigenous people in the Alaska landscape and is also in line with the state of Alaska's request, first made in 1975, to name the mountain Denali.

S. 791 - Justice Thurgood Marshall National Historic Site Establishment Act: NPCA **supports** this legislation, which would establish the Justice Thurgood Marshall National Historic Site as an affiliated area of the National Park Service and preserve a nationally significant landmark, PS 103 in West Baltimore, that shaped one of our country's most influential civil rights leaders.

S. 1131 - Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve Establishment Act: NPCA supports establishing the Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve in the State of Georgia to conserve both cultural and historical resources, as well as wildlife and hunting lands within the Ocmulgee River Corridor between the cities of Macon and Hawkinsville. We also support additional opportunities for Tribal participation in co-stewardship of cultural and natural resources. As this bill moves forward to markup, we look forward to working with the committee to ensure

NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

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Congress maximizes the opportunity at Ocmulgee, including protecting additional areas in Twiggs and Houston Counties identified as nationally significant in the special resource study and aligning with and safeguarding the Robins Air Force Base Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration program boundary.

S. 1777 – Joshua Tree National Park Expansion Act: NPCA **supports** this legislation which expands the boundary of Joshua Tree National Park in California, consistent with the findings of the Park Service's 2016 Boundary Expansion Study. The lands to be incorporated are surrounded on three sides by Joshua Tree National Park. Including these lands in Joshua Tree supports conservation and recreation goals in this region. NPCA also supports the provision that renames the Cottonwood Visitor Center to recognize the significant, decades-long efforts by Senator Dianne Feinstein to conserve Joshua Tree National Park and the California desert for the benefit of all Americans.

S. 1870 - Rim of the Valley Corridor Preservation Act: NPCA supports this legislation, which would expand the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area to include the Rim of the Valley, an area rich in both natural and cultural resources, including critical wildlife corridors, waterways and landscapes worthy of inclusion in our National Park System. With more than 17 million people, the Los Angeles Metropolitan area is the second most populous region of the country; yet it has less open space per capita than all other large cities on the west coast. This legislation is an opportunity to better protect and manage some of the region's last wild lands and open spaces including habitat for threatened species ranging from the mountain lions to the red legged frogs and historic sites that will allow the National Park Service to tell the story of Los Angeles's rich history. The expanded presence of the National Park Service will facilitate new partnerships with schools, local governments and community-based organizations, expand agency-led interpretive programs, connect more youth and families to the outdoors, and build a new generation of park enthusiasts while having no impact on local private property rights or land use authorities.

S. 2270 - Myakka Wild and Scenic River Act: NPCA **supports** this legislation, which would designate for the Myakka River as a part of the Wild and Scenic Rivers System. This will help bolster conservation and recognition of an important ecosystem with direct connectivity to the Everglades to Gulf Conservation Area. For decades, NPCA has championed conservation of the Greater Everglades ecosystem and recognizes that advancing protections for upstream waters benefits the broader ecosystem.

S. 2308 - Protecting America's Treasures by Raising Inflow from Overseas Tourists Parks Act (PATRIOT) Parks Act: Entrance and recreation fees are vital to keeping national parks running, funding everything from trail repairs and educational programs to law enforcement and visitor services. While NPCA supports new and innovative ideas to fund maintenance projects in our national parks and charging international visitors more is not uncommon globally, this legislation authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to collect a surcharge from international visitors to the National Park System is unnecessary. The administration issued new fees for non-residents to begin on January 1, 2026. NPCA has raised concerns with the Secretary of the Interior regarding the implementation of non-resident fees and their potential impact on public access to our nation's treasured parks and lands. We welcome working with the bill sponsor to understand the administration's new policy to ensure these new fees don't become a barrier that keeps people from experiencing America's most iconic places.

S. 2385 - Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History Act: NPCA **opposes** this legislation, which would make it illegal for the National Park Service or the Smithsonian to interpret our history in ways that are accurate, honest, and inclusive. Outlawing the study of slavery, civil rights and race will make our parks, our museums and our country less aware of our history and how the past continues to exert an influence over present times.

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S. 2708 - Appalachian Trail Centennial Act: NPCA continues to have reservations about this legislation which statutorily allows for the establishment of one or more “Designated Operating Partner” to serve as the primary non-profit organization for each national trail and further recognizes Appalachian Trail Conservancy as the first. The national trails are administered by the Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the land management agencies. The federal government currently enters into cooperative agreements with States, landowners, private organizations, individuals and other non-federal partners to operate, develop and maintain any portion of a national trail. These partnerships are necessary and integral to the preservation, maintenance and operation of the national trails and associated facilities. While we do appreciate allowing one or more designated partner, we continue to have reservations about how this legislation impacts the role of other partners. In addition, to ensure public participation and transparency in decision-making by the Designated Operational Partner, we ask bill sponsors to remove the exemption in the bill from the Federal Advisory Committee requirements (Chapter 10 of title 5, United States Code).

S. 2970 - To authorize the use of off-highway vehicles in certain areas of the Capitol Reef National Park:

NPCA **opposes** this legislation, which would strip the National Park Service’s ability to fully manage Capitol Reef National Park’s roads by opening them to off-road vehicles. OHVs are built for travelling off-road, have more aggressive tire treads that cause greater wear on backcountry roads, lead to more dust and erosion, and far exceed the Park Service’s standards for noise, especially as they often travel in groups. OHVs would denigrate the very resources Capitol Reef has been set aside to protect, with impacts on wildlife, endangered species, and the visitor experience. Adding off-road vehicles to both the busiest paved roads, in addition to the most remote backcountry routes, would ruin the unique and increasingly rare experience of desert solitude and natural quiet that visitors travel to Capitol Reef to experience. Substantial opportunities for OHV use, both on and off road exist on Bureau of Land Management, US Forest Service, and the many other public lands in Utah not managed by the National Park Service. A national park setting is not appropriate or required for OHV use, yet Capitol Reef is just the tip of the iceberg if this is what is to come for national parks across the country.

Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

Christina Hazard
Legislative Director

NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

777 6th Street NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20001 | 800.628.7275 | npca.org

Testimony of Andrea Ketchmark
Executive Director, North Country Trail Association
S. 2708, the Appalachian Trail Centennial Act

Chairman Daines, Ranking Member King, and Members of the National Parks Subcommittee:

I write to you on behalf of the North Country Trail Association (NCTA), the nonprofit partner of the National Park Service with the mission to develop, maintain, protect and promote the North Country National Scenic Trail (NCNST), America's longest National Scenic Trail stretching more than 4,800 miles from North Dakota to Vermont.

Designated by Congress in 1980, the NCNST is a perfect example of the public/private partnership model that fuels our public lands. National Trails weave together a tapestry of public lands (federal, state and local), conserved lands and private land to create a network which is then all stewarded by volunteers and partners. The National Park Service serves in a very important lead role of Administrator, but it is the NCTA and our hundreds of partners and thousands of volunteers who make it a reality on the ground. As such, we applaud the sponsor's intent to recognize and strengthen the essential role of nonprofit trail partners, encourage planning & land acquisition and to remind Congress and the agencies about the importance of national trails to the Nation's economic health.

Designated Operating Partner (Sec.4(b)(1))

NCTA is supportive of the idea of a Designated Operating Partner (DOP). This designation would put in statute the partnerships that have been in practice for decades. Beyond the roles outlined for a DOP in S.2708, we ask that DOPs be consulted in any and all processes impacting the trail's operations, including volunteer management, and that subsequent guidance be given to the agencies to ensure DOPs are woven into the decision making processes.

Although NCTA supports the idea, we are concerned about the designation process itself. As it's currently written, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy is assigned the DOP role in this legislation but future DOPs will be a Secretarial decision. Whether Secretarial or Congressional, we are only concerned that the designation process be based on merit and not mired in bureaucracy, just as Unit Status was for the North Country, Ice Age and New England Trails for decades.

Trail Planning and Acquisition (Sec.4(b)(3))

Trail planning and land acquisition are by far the biggest needs in the National Trails System. National Trail designation is not a stamp of approval on a complete trail, but rather a mandate the agency is responsible for fulfilling. Nearly 50 years after the designation of the North Country Trail, more than 1,500 miles of its route are still to be developed. NCTA would like to reinforce the importance of this section and supports the idea of priority acquisition lists and regular progress reports to Congress.

Visitor capacity and economic impact (Sec. 5(a) and (b))

The North Country National Scenic Trail is within a two hour drive of 40 million Americans and the trail fuels tourism and local economies. As such, visitor capacity and economic impact studies are extremely valuable but there is concern that these additional requirements will be put on our existing trail offices who are already underfunded and understaffed. Some of the processes set forth in the legislation formalize work already being done by trail organizations; therefore, legislators are encouraged to ensure new mandates do not unintentionally divert capacity away from on-the-ground trail completion and stewardship.

I thank Senators Kaine and Tillis for introducing this legislation to recognize the century of public public/private partnership that built the Appalachian Trail and laid the foundation for our National Trails System. We also thank the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's leadership in championing this legislation and appreciate the opportunity for all scenic and historic trail organizations to participate meaningfully in future refinements of it.

I urge Senators Kaine and Tillis and the members of the National Parks Subcommittee to work with the national trails community to refine this important legislation so that it will work for the benefit of all 32 National Scenic and Historic Trails.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Andrea Ketchmark". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Andrea" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Ketchmark".

Andrea Ketchmark
Executive Director
North Country Trail Association



February 14, 2024

Honorable Senator Joe Manchin III
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
306 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Senator Angus King, Jr.
Chairman
Subcommittee on National Parks
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
133 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Senator John Barrasso
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
307 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Senator Steve Daines
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on National Parks
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
320 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC, 20510

Honorable Chairmen and Ranking Members,

We are writing to support the swift passage of legislation to create the Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve in the 118th Congress, to express gratitude for the federal efforts to meet this moment after almost a century of civic advocacy, and to acknowledge that we are committed to continuing to fulfill the vision of this Park and Preserve.

The Ocmulgee River is a special place, recognized by the National Park Service as one of America's most important and significant wildlife habitat corridors, tribally significant landscapes, and archaeological sites with the opportunity of creating the first and only National Park and Preserve in Georgia. The legislation to create the Park and Preserve unit is carefully tailored to the recommendations of the National Park Service's Special Resource Study and has broad local support across varying fields, interests, and political ideologies.

Conserving the series of ecological and cultural assets as a National Park and Preserve is vital to the region. It will serve as a robust form of long term and stable economic development for the Middle Georgia region, enhance climate resilience for local ecosystems by preserving biodiversity hotspots, which are most effective in larger contiguous landscapes, offer an avenue for co-management between the tribal, state and federal land managers, and constitute

one of the largest potential expansions of public hunting and fishing access in Georgia.

The Muscogee (Creek) Nation has been in consultation with the National Historical Park for years due to the significance of the ancestral sites inside the proposed boundary. But as landowners in the corridor as well their long-standing commitment to the stewardship of the corridor, common practices of co-management at other units around the country, this Park and Preserve legislation would create a path toward co-management to be agreed upon by all land managers.

In addition to the Muscogee (Creek) cultural sites, the wildlife habitat along the Ocmulgee has also remained unspoiled. The opportunity for connectivity is uniquely possible because so many private and public parcels are already protected along the corridor. Included is the 6,500-acre Bond Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, part of roughly 85,000 acres of contiguous swamp, the largest block of forested habitat in the upper coastal plain. The park sits on the banks of the Ocmulgee River on the Macon Plateau along the Fall Line, the edge of a prehistoric sea and geological boundary that separates the hills of the Piedmont and the flatlands of the Atlantic coastal plain.

Further, the economic impact of the park and preserve cannot be overstated. A study conducted by the National Parks Conservation Association estimates that the proposed National Park and Preserve will have a tremendous economic impact along the corridor. The study estimates that over the course of 15 years the region's municipalities can expect a collective increase in tax revenue annually of \$29.8 Million because of the projected \$206.7 Million of total economic activity generated from the Park and Preserve.

Lastly, one of the key economic engines of Middle Georgia is Robins Air Force Base (RAFB) in Warner Robins. This Park and Preserve will potentially offer a quality of life increase for the communities housed on base and the live in the region. It will also allow partners to put land along the Ocmulgee flood plain near the base into conservation, helping stave off encroachment into flight pattern areas. Future development in the areas east of the base is important to protect against incompatible land use. Conserving undeveloped lands within the Ocmulgee River Corridor will help the base continue to fulfill our national security missions, which is vital to the economic vitality of the entire Middle Georgia region.

Land abutting Robins AFB is vacant and mostly undeveloped. Legislation creating the National Park and Preserve will potentially allow RAFB, and park partners to leverage the Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program to protect the environs inside their REPI boundary and inside the expanded Preserve boundary. It is for this reason that the Sustainability Plan for RAFB formally recommends the creation of the National Park and Preserve.

To continue the robust effort of creating full connectivity of the corridor, we fully support the passage of legislation during the 118th Congress to establish and create the first and only National Park and Preserve in Georgia. By protecting this landscape, working with the Muscogee (Creek) Nation as co-managers of their ancestral homeland, preserving the diverse wildlife habitat, protecting and increasing access to public hunting, fishing, and wildlife habitat, and increases name recognition and thereby national and international prominence of this treasure, this legislation will finally allow the Middle Georgia, local and national conservationist, the hunting and angling, and Muscogee (Creek) communities to preserve the corridor for generations to come.

Regards,


Brig Gen John C. Kubinec, USAF (ret)
President/CEO

ALTAMAHA RIVERKEEPER

OCMULGEE | OCONEE | OHOOPEE | GOLDEN ISLES

Altamaha Riverkeeper

PO Box 4122

Macon GA 31208

2/14/2024

Honorable Senator Joe Manchin III

Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
306 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Senator Angus King, Jr.

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Subcommittee on National Parks
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Conserving the series of ecological and cultural assets as a National Park and Preserve is vital to the region. It will serve as a robust form of long term and stable economic development for the Middle Georgia region, enhance climate resilience for local ecosystems by preserving biodiversity hotspots, which are most effective in larger contiguous landscapes, offer an avenue for co-management between the tribal, state and federal land managers, and constitute one of the largest potential expansions of public hunting and fishing access in Georgia.

The Muscogee (Creek) Nation has been in consultation with the National Historical Park for years due to the significance of the ancestral sites inside the proposed boundary. But as landowners in the corridor as well their long-standing commitment to the stewardship of the corridor, common practices of co-management at other units around the country, this Park and Preserve legislation would create a path toward co-management to be agreed upon by all land managers.

In addition to the Muscogee (Creek) cultural sites, the wildlife habitat along the Ocmulgee has also remained unspoiled. The opportunity for connectivity is uniquely possible because so many private and public parcels are already protected along the corridor. Included is the 6,500-acre Bond Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, part of roughly 85,000 acres of contiguous swamp, the largest block of forested habitat in the upper coastal plain. The park sits on the banks of the Ocmulgee River on the Macon Plateau along the Fall Line, the edge of a prehistoric sea and geological boundary that separates the hills of the Piedmont and the flatlands of the Atlantic coastal plain.

Further, the economic impact of the park and preserve cannot be overstated. A study conducted by the National Parks Conservation Association estimates that the proposed National Park and Preserve will have a tremendous economic impact along the corridor. The study estimates that over the course of 15 years the region's municipalities can expect a collective increase in tax revenue annually of \$29.8 Million because of the projected \$206.7 Million of total economic activity generated from the Park and Preserve.

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To continue the robust effort of creating full connectivity of the corridor, we fully support the passage of legislation during the 118th Congress to establish and create the first and only National Park and Preserve in Georgia. By protecting this landscape, working with the Muscogee (Creek) Nation as co-managers of their ancestral homeland, preserving the diverse wildlife habitat, protecting and increasing access to public hunting, fishing, and wildlife habitat, and increases name recognition and thereby national and international prominence of this treasure, this legislation will finally allow the Middle Georgia, local and national conservationist, the hunting and angling, and Muscogee (Creek) communities to preserve the corridor for generations to come.

As stewards of the corridor, it is up to us to fulfill the vision of a fully connected and conserved corridor, but we cannot continue to do so without swift federal action from Congress. That is why we support the passage of federal legislation in the 118th Congress. Every year that goes by without action, we risk future development, lost cultural sites, and missed opportunities for significant economic development in the beloved region of Middle Georgia. As a region and partnership, we have been preparing for

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this moment and are ready to rise to the challenge of filling the proposed boundary.

Regards,

Fletcher Sams

Fletcher Sams

Executive Director

Ocmulgee Office -- P.O. Box 4122 • Macon, GA 31208
Altamaha Office -- 127 F St, Suite 204, Brunswick, GA 31520
• 478-845-5370 www.altamahariverkeeper.org •



THE
CONSERVATION FUND
825 Warner St. SW, Suite C Atlanta, GA 30310

May 28, 2024

The Honorable Jon Ossoff
United States Senator
Hart Senate Office Building, Suite 303
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Austin Scott
United States Representative
Rayburn House Office Building, Room 2185
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Ossoff and Representative Scott:

Thank you for leadership. The Conservation Fund strongly supports the prompt passage of your respective bills, S 4216 and H.R. 8182, the Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve (OMNP&P) Establishment Act, during the 118th Congress. We greatly appreciate your efforts to advance this initiative, which has been championed by civic advocates for nearly a century. The Conservation Fund is committed to collaborating with all partners to realize this vision.

As a national nonprofit focused on environmental protection and economic development, we recognize the Ocmulgee River as one of America's most ecologically rich, culturally significant, and archaeologically valuable sites. Establishing the OMNP&P in Georgia will enhance climate resilience, preserve biodiversity, foster tribal co-management, and stimulate sustainable economic growth in Middle Georgia.

This proposed park will improve connections among various stakeholders, most prominently the Muscogee Nation, by preserving their ancestral sites and promoting co-management practices. Additionally, the park will integrate existing public and private protected lands, creating a cohesive corridor for habitat protection and outdoor recreation.

As you know, the economic benefit of this project will be substantial. According to a National Parks Conservation Association study, the park is expected to generate \$206.7 million in economic activity and \$29.8 million in annual tax revenue over 15 years. Furthermore, it will enhance the quality of life for communities near Robins Air Force Base and help prevent incompatible land use near the base, supporting both national security and regional economic vitality.

We urge swift federal action to establish the OMNP&P as the first and only National Park and Preserve in Georgia. Delay risks development pressures, loss of cultural heritage, and missed economic opportunities. We stand ready to support this transformative project for the benefit of future generations.

Sincerely,



Stacy Funderburke,
Vice President and Regional Director



March 4, 2024

To: Members of Georgia's Congressional Delegation

Dear Georgia Delegation Members,

On behalf of our more than 47,000 members, the Georgia Chamber of Commerce, is expressing its support for the passage of legislation to create the Ocmulgee National Park and Preserve in 2024, to express gratitude for the bipartisan federal efforts to meet this moment after almost a century of civic advocacy, and to express support for the blossoming tribal, nontribal partnership the middle Georgia region has with the Muscogee (Creek) Nation that is centered around the co-management of Georgia's first National Park and Preserve.

This admirable civic partnership of chambers of commerce, conservation, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, hunting and fishing advocates has been almost a century in the making, with chambers of commerce being intimately involved throughout the process. [In fact, the formal process of creating a National Monument out of the Ocmulgee Old Fields formally began in 1933, when the Macon Junior Chamber of Commerce purchased the sacred sites and requested they be protected.](#)

The Ocmulgee Corridor is a special place, recognized as one of America's most important wildlife habitat corridors, tribally significant landscapes, and archaeological sites with the opportunity of creating the first and only National Park and Preserve in Georgia.

Conserving the series of ecological and cultural assets as a National Park and Preserve is vital to the region. It will enhance resilience for local ecosystems by preserving biodiversity hotspots, which are most effective in larger contiguous landscapes, offer an avenue for co-management between the federally recognized tribe of purview, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and the Department of Interior, protect and enhance hunting and fishing access, as protect private property rights in middle Georgia, and serve as a robust form of economic development for the Middle Georgia region.

An independent [study conducted by the National Parks Conservation Association](#) and funded by the Knight Foundation, estimates that the proposed National Park and Preserve will have a tremendous economic impact along the corridor. The study estimates that over the course of 15 years after being re-designated a National Park and Preserve, the region's municipalities can expect a collective increase in tax revenue annually of \$29.8 Million because of the projected \$206.7 Million of total economic activity generated from the Park and Preserve.

The study estimates that the region should prepare for an increase of 1.16 million visitors annually and for the roughly \$76.5 Million dollar increase of annual labor income that could be generated by an influx of almost 3,000 jobs.

Macon, as the hub city of the region and the gateway to the current National Historical Park, has invested tens of millions of dollars in infrastructure projects to support the expected growth, incentivized a trail system that connects the city with the park, has donated hundreds of acres to the current historical park, and is actively investing and planning to be an even stronger partner and steward ahead of the Park and Preserve designation.

Another key economic engine of Middle Georgia is Robins Air Force Base (RAFB) in Warner Robins. This Park and Preserve will potentially offer a quality of life increase for the communities housed on base and the live in the region. These factors, among others, are why the [Middle Georgia Robins Air Force Base Sustainability plan formally recommends that Congress create the National Park and Preserve](#). The Park and Preserve is key to the success of this mission, which, in turn, is key to the economic well-being of the region.

All of these factors are vital to the long-term viability of the middle Georgia economy and as such the Georgia Chamber of Commerce proudly supports the creation of the National Park and Preserve. We urge support for this initiative and welcome you to urge Congress to act this year so that Middle Georgia can begin to reap the economic benefits of their stewardship of this important landscape.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Chris Clark", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Chris Clark
President and CEO
Georgia Chamber of Commerce

230 Peachtree Street NW
Suite 2275
Atlanta, GA 30303
tel 404.876.2900
georgiaconservancy.org

February 14, 2024



Attn:

Honorable Senator Joe Manchin III
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
306 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

PRESIDENT
Katherine Moore*

Honorable Senator Angus King, Jr.
Chairman
Subcommittee on National Parks
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
133 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

BOARD CHAIR
Virginia Harman, Cave Spring*

Honorable Senator John Barrasso
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
307 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

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Jennifer Winn, Atlanta
Tim Yeager, Roswell

Honorable Senator Steve Daines
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on National Parks
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
320 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC, 20510

Honorable Chairmen and Ranking Members,

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The Muscogee (Creek) Nation has been in consultation with the National Historical Park for years due to the significance of the ancestral sites inside the proposed boundary. But as landowners in the corridor as well their long-standing commitment to the stewardship of the

ADVISORY COUNCIL
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*Executive Committee Member

corridor, common practices of co-management at other units around the country, this Park and Preserve legislation would create a path toward co-management to be agreed upon by all land managers.



In addition to the Muscogee (Creek) cultural sites, the wildlife habitat along the Ocmulgee has also remained unspoiled. The opportunity for connectivity is uniquely possible because so many private and public parcels are already protected along the corridor. Included is the 6,500-acre Bond Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, part of roughly 85,000 acres of contiguous swamp, the largest block of forested habitat in the upper coastal plain. The park sits on the banks of the Ocmulgee River on the Macon Plateau along the Fall Line, the edge of a prehistoric sea and geological boundary that separates the hills of the Piedmont and the flatlands of the Atlantic coastal plain.

Further, the economic impact of the park and preserve cannot be overstated. A study conducted by the National Parks Conservation Association estimates that the proposed National Park and Preserve will have a tremendous economic impact along the corridor. The study estimates that over the course of 15 years the region's municipalities can expect a collective increase in tax revenue annually of \$29.8 Million because of the projected \$206.7 Million of total economic activity generated from the Park and Preserve.

Lastly, one of the key economic engines of Middle Georgia is Robins Air Force Base (RAFB) in Warner Robins. This Park and Preserve will potentially offer a quality of life increase for the communities housed on base and the live in the region. It will also allow partners to put land along the Ocmulgee flood plain near the base into conservation, helping stave off encroachment into flight pattern areas. Future development in the areas east of the base is important to protect against incompatible land use. Conserving undeveloped lands within the Ocmulgee River Corridor will help the base continue to fulfill our national security missions, which is vital to the economic vitality of the entire Middle Georgia region.

Land abutting Robins AFB is vacant and mostly undeveloped. Legislation creating the National Park and Preserve will potentially allow RAFB, and park partners to leverage the Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program to protect the environs inside their REPI boundary and inside the expanded Preserve boundary. It is for this reason that the Sustainability Plan for RAFB formally recommends the creation of the National Park and Preserve.

To continue the robust effort of creating full connectivity of the corridor, we fully support the passage of legislation during the 118th Congress to establish and create the first and only National Park and Preserve in Georgia. By protecting this landscape, working with the Muscogee (Creek) Nation as co-managers of their ancestral homeland, preserving the diverse wildlife habitat, protecting and increasing access to public hunting, fishing, and wildlife habitat, and increases name recognition and thereby national and international prominence of this treasure, this legislation will finally allow the Middle Georgia, local and national conservationist, the hunting and angling, and Muscogee (Creek) communities to preserve the corridor for generations to come.

As stewards of the corridor, it is up to us to fulfill the vision of a fully connected and conserved corridor, but we cannot continue to do so without swift federal action from Congress. That is why we support the passage of federal legislation in the 118th Congress. Every year that goes by without action, we risk future development, lost cultural sites, and missed opportunities for significant economic development in the beloved region of Middle Georgia. As a region and partnership, we have been preparing for this moment and are ready to rise to the challenge of filling the proposed boundary.

Regards,


Katherine Moore, AICP
President, Georgia Conservancy



BRIAN KEMP
GOVERNOR

WALTER RABON
COMMISSIONER

May 8, 2024

The Honorable Austin Scott
U.S. House of Representatives
2185 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Subject: Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve Establishment Act

Dear Congressman Scott,

On behalf of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GADNR), I am writing to express our support for the expansion of hunting and fishing opportunities afforded in the Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve Establishment Act. As an agency committed to the stewardship of Georgia's rich natural, historic, and cultural resources, we find that the provisions outlined in this Act align with our mission and strategic goals.

GADNR appreciates the Advisory Council opportunity the Act offers the Department to assist with developing the management plan for the Preserve. GADNR supports expansion of the Preserve's boundaries to encompass transitional and upland habitats along the Ocmulgee River Corridor. This expansion is vital for the protection of diverse ecosystems that play a crucial role in maintaining biological diversity and ecological health in the region.

As the regulatory authority for hunting and fishing opportunities within the state, we would like to request that hunting and fishing be administered in the same manner as prior to establishment of the park and preserve.

Furthermore, the GADNR strongly advocates for the conservation and active management and restoration of high-priority and critical fish and wildlife habitats in this area. Active management and ongoing population monitoring are essential components to achieving these conservation goals. Such measures ensure that the Preserve operates effectively, maintaining the ecological integrity of the area while providing educational, recreational, and conservation benefits to the public.

We believe that the enactment of the Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve Establishment Act would represent a significant step forward in preserving a unique part of our state's heritage and natural beauty. It would not only safeguard the environmental and historical treasures within the

2 MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DRIVE, S.E., SUITE 1252 EAST | ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30334-9000
404.656.3500 | FAX 404.656.0770 | WWW.GADNR.ORG

Preserve but also enhance the quality of life for all Georgians by providing increased opportunities for education, recreation, and tourism.

Thank you for considering our perspective on this important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Walter Rabon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Walter" being more legible than the last name "Rabon".

Walter Rabon
Commissioner
Georgia Department of Natural Resources

Cc: The Honorable Brian P. Kemp, Governor of Georgia



113 Arkwright Landing
Macon, Georgia 31210
(478) 757-1211

GeorgiaMining.org

Our State, Our Resources, Our Future

To Whom it may concern,

The Georgia Mining Association supports the bipartisan Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve Act and urges its passage in the 118th Congress. We have discussed the legislation's impact with our members and existing industry in the region and believe this legislation protects the private property rights of our members, as well as bolsters the overall quality of life and economy of middle Georgia. Further, we appreciate the partnership and consultation with the stakeholders who have worked on this legislation. We look forward to continued collaboration toward the shared goal of protecting middle Georgia's resources and economy for generations to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lee Lemke".

Lee Lemke
Executive Vice President
Georgia Mining Association



GEORGIA WILDLIFE FEDERATION

February 13, 2024

Honorable Senator Joe Manchin III
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
306 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Senator Angus King, Jr.
Chairman
Subcommittee on National Parks
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
133 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Senator John Barrasso
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
307 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Senator Steve Daines
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on National Parks
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
320 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC, 20510

Honorable Chairmen and Ranking Members,

We are writing to support the swift passage of legislation to create the Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve in the 118th Congress, to express gratitude for the federal efforts to meet this moment after almost a century of civic advocacy, and to acknowledge that we are committed to continuing to fulfill the vision of this Park and Preserve.

Georgia Wildlife Federation (GWF) is Georgia's oldest and largest member supported conservation organization. Founded in 1936, GWF has been integrally involved in virtually every significant conservation initiative in Georgia for almost a century. GWF is a proponent for the professional, science-based management of our wildlife and natural resources. Or as we like to say, we are "Keeping Georgia Wild."

The Ocmulgee River is a special place, recognized by the National Park Service as one of America's most important and significant wildlife habitat corridors, tribally significant landscapes, and archaeological sites with the

opportunity of creating the first and only National Park and Preserve in Georgia. The legislation to create the Park and Preserve unit is carefully tailored to the recommendations of the National Park Service's Special Resource Study and has broad local support across varying fields, interests, and political ideologies.

Conserving the series of ecological and cultural assets as a National Park and Preserve is vital to the region. It will serve as a robust form of long term and stable economic development for the Middle Georgia region, enhance climate resilience for local ecosystems by preserving biodiversity hotspots, which are most effective in larger contiguous landscapes, offer an avenue for co-management between the tribal, state and federal land managers, and constitute one of the largest potential expansions of public hunting and fishing access in Georgia.

The Muscogee (Creek) Nation has been in consultation with the National Historical Park for years due to the significance of the ancestral sites inside the proposed boundary. Landowners in the corridor, following their long-standing commitment to the stewardship of the corridor, evidenced as common practices of co-management at other units around the country, demonstrate this Park and Preserve legislation would create a path toward co-management to be agreed upon by all land managers.

Of significance to our specific mission, in addition to the Muscogee (Creek) cultural sites, the wildlife habitat along the Ocmulgee has also remained unspoiled. The opportunity for connectivity is uniquely possible because so many private and public parcels are already protected along the corridor. Included is the 6,500-acre Bond Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, part of roughly 85,000 acres of contiguous swamp, the largest block of forested habitat in the upper coastal plain. The park sits on the banks of the Ocmulgee River on the Macon Plateau along the Fall Line, the edge of a prehistoric sea and geological boundary that separates the hills of the Piedmont and the flatlands of the Atlantic coastal plain.

Georgia Wildlife Federation was founded by hunters and anglers, and it is important for us to ensure that hunting and fishing are included as integral components of this initiative. Thus the designation of the Park and Preserve component. Where appropriate and where historic and cultural traditions allow, hunting and fishing will be integral to the Park and Preserve.

Further, the economic impact of the park and preserve cannot be overstated. A study conducted by the National Parks Conservation Association estimates that the proposed National Park and Preserve will have a tremendous economic impact along the corridor. The study estimates that over the course of 15 years the region's municipalities can expect a collective increase in tax revenue annually of \$29.8 Million because of the projected \$206.7 Million of total economic activity generated from the Park and Preserve.

Lastly, one of the key economic engines of Middle Georgia is Robins Air Force Base (RAFB) in Warner Robins. This Park and Preserve will potentially offer a quality of life increase for the communities housed on base and those that live in the region. It will also allow partners to put land along the Ocmulgee flood plain near the base into conservation, helping stave off encroachment into flight pattern areas. Future development in the areas east of the base is important to protect against incompatible land use. Conserving undeveloped lands within the Ocmulgee River Corridor will help the base continue to fulfill our national security missions, which is vital to the economic vitality of the entire Middle Georgia region.

Land abutting Robins AFB is vacant and mostly undeveloped. Legislation creating the National Park and Preserve will potentially allow RAFB, and park partners to leverage the Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program to protect the environs inside their REPI boundary and inside the expanded Preserve boundary. It is

for this reason that the Sustainability Plan for RAFB formally recommends the creation of the National Park and Preserve.

To continue the robust effort of creating full connectivity of the corridor, we fully support the passage of legislation during the 118th Congress to establish and create the first and only National Park and Preserve in Georgia. By protecting this landscape, working with the Muscogee (Creek) Nation as co-managers of their ancestral homeland, preserving the diverse wildlife habitat, protecting and increasing access to public hunting, fishing, and wildlife habitat, and increases name recognition and thereby national and international prominence of this treasure, this legislation will finally allow the Middle Georgia, local and national conservationist, the hunting and angling, and Muscogee (Creek) communities to preserve the corridor for generations to come.

As stewards of the corridor, it is up to us to fulfill the vision of a fully connected and conserved corridor, but we cannot continue to do so without swift federal action from Congress. That is why we support the passage of federal legislation in the 118th Congress. Every year that goes by without action, we risk future development, lost cultural sites, and missed opportunities for significant economic development in the beloved region of Middle Georgia. As a region and partnership, we have been preparing for this moment and are ready to rise to the challenge of filling the proposed boundary.

Respectfully submitted,



Mike Worley
President and CEO
Georgia Wildlife Federation



February 15, 2024

Honorable Senator Joe Manchin III

Chairman

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
306 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Senator Angus King, Jr.

Chairman

Subcommittee on National Parks
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
133 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Senator John Barrasso

Ranking Member

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
307 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Senator Steve Daines

Ranking Member

Subcommittee on National Parks
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
320 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC, 20510

Honorable Chairmen and Ranking

Chair, Government and Military Affairs, Greater Macon Chamber Board of Directors



Honorable Chairmen and Ranking Members,

February 15, 2024

The Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce, the most significant, organized business community in Macon-Bibb County, Georgia, collaborates with other economic agencies to represent the vibrant community and economic interests of our Central Georgia region. On behalf of our 750 invested businesses and governing board, we are writing this letter to express our strong support for the swift passage of legislation to designate the Ocmulgee Mounds as a National Park and Preserve. This initiative, culminating from nearly a century of advocacy, presents a historic opportunity to boost economic development, preserve our nation's heritage, and protect our natural environment for future generations. We are committed to realizing the vision of this Park and Preserve and urge your support to make it a reality.

We encourage the swift passage of legislation to create the Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve in the 118th Congress, to express gratitude for the federal efforts to meet this moment after almost a century of civic advocacy, and to acknowledge that we are committed to continuing to fulfill the vision of this Park and Preserve.

The passage of this legislation will create instant economic impact to Central Georgia, stretching from its urban gateway in Macon-Bibb County, Georgia, through neighboring, rural Twiggs County, to the Houston County border of Robins Air Force Base, the largest single-site industrial complex in Georgia.

The economic impact of the park and preserve cannot be overstated. A study conducted by the National Parks Conservation Association estimates that the proposed National Park and Preserve will have a tremendous economic impact along the corridor, which includes these three Georgia counties. The study estimates that over the course of 15 years the region's municipalities can expect a collective increase in tax revenue annually of \$29.8 Million because of the projected \$206.7 Million of total economic activity generated from the Park and Preserve.

338 Poplar St. Macon, Ga. 31204
(478) 621-2000 / maconchamber.com



February 15, 2024

The impact and resulting expenditures will spur entrepreneurship, create jobs and transform underserved areas of rural economies.

This legislation is diverse and inclusive. The Muscogee (Creek) Nation has been in consultation with the National Historical Park for years due to the significance of the ancestral sites inside the proposed boundary. The Nation remains landowners in the corridor, and we honor their long-standing commitment to the stewardship of the corridor. As common, inclusive practices of co-management at other units around the country, this Park and Preserve legislation would create a path toward co-management to be agreed upon by all land managers.

The Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce, as well as other local economic development agencies have met and will continue meet with the Muscogee (Creek) Nation's economic development team, including the Nation's Secretary of Commerce and director of supplier diversity initiatives, to generate business investment, bridge workforce gaps and collaborate on strategic economic initiatives catalyzed by National Park status.

Robins Air Force Base (RAFB) will benefit from this legislation. This Park and Preserve will potentially offer a quality of life increase for the communities housed on Robins Air Force Base, as well as a workforce of almost 24,000 civilians, contractors and military members who live in the region. It will also allow partners to put land along the Ocmulgee flood plain near the base into conservation, helping stave off encroachment into flight pattern areas. Future development in the areas east of the Base is important to protect against incompatible land use. Conserving undeveloped lands within the Ocmulgee River Corridor will help the Base continue to fulfill our national security missions, which is vital to the economic vitality of the entire Central Georgia region.



February 15, 2024

Land abutting Robins AFB is vacant and mostly undeveloped. Legislation creating the National Park and Preserve will potentially allow RAFB and park partners to leverage the Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program to protect the environs inside their REPI boundary and inside the expanded Preserve boundary. It is for this reason that the Sustainability Plan for RAFB formally recommends the creation of the National Park and Preserve.

The legislation to create the Park and Preserve unit is carefully tailored to the recommendations of the National Park Service's Special Resource Study and has broad local support across varying fields, interests, and political ideologies. It will serve as a robust form of long term and stable economic development for the Central Georgia region, enhance climate resilience for local ecosystems by preserving biodiversity hotspots, which are most effective in larger contiguous landscapes, offer an avenue for co-management between the tribal, state and federal land managers, and constitute one of the largest potential expansions of public hunting and fishing access in Georgia.

To continue the robust effort of creating full connectivity of the corridor, we fully support the passage of legislation during the 118th Congress to establish and create the first and only National Park and Preserve in Georgia. By protecting this landscape, working with the Muscogee (Creek) Nation as co-managers of their ancestral homeland, preserving the diverse wildlife habitat, protecting and increasing access to public hunting, fishing, and wildlife habitat, and increasing name recognition and thereby national and international prominence of this treasure, this legislation will finally allow Central Georgia, local and national conservationist, the hunting and angling, and Muscogee (Creek) communities to preserve the corridor for generations to come.



February 15, 2024

The Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce supports the passage of federal legislation in the 118th Congress. Every year that goes by without action, we risk future development, lost cultural sites, and missed opportunities for significant economic development Central Georgia. As a region and partnership, we have been preparing for this moment and are ready to rise to the challenge and great privilege of being home to one of America's greatest treasures, our country's next National Park and Preserve.

In conclusion, the designation of the Ocmulgee Mounds as a National Park and Preserve represents a critical step toward sustainable economic development, conservation of natural and cultural resources, and the strengthening of our community's quality of life. We stand ready to support this transformative project and respectfully call on your leadership to ensure its passage during the 118th Congress. Together, we can safeguard this treasure for future generations while unlocking the potential for significant economic and environmental benefits.

Thank you for considering our perspective on this vital issue. We look forward to your support and to welcoming a new chapter of conservation and prosperity in Central Georgia.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Jessica Walden'.

Jessica Walden

President & CEO, Greater Macon Chamber of Commerce

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Chrissy Miner'.

Chrissy Miner

**Chair, Government and Military Affairs, Greater Macon Chamber
Board of Directors**



HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Serving All of Houston County

OFFICE

200 Carl Vinson Parkway
Warner Robins, GA 31088
478-542-2115
Fax 478-923-5697

COMMISSIONERS

DAN PERDUE
Chairman

MARK BYRD
GAIL C. ROBINSON
TAL TALTON
SHANE GOTTLWALS

March 6, 2024

Honorable Senator Joe Manchin III
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
306 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Senator Angus King, Jr.
Chairman
Subcommittee on National Parks
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
133 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Senator John Barrasso
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
307 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Senator Steve Daines
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on National Parks
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
320 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC, 20510

RE: Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve

Honorable Chairmen and Ranking Members,
We are writing to support the swift passage of legislation to create the Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve in the 118th Congress, to express gratitude for the federal efforts to meet this moment after almost a century of civic advocacy, and to acknowledge that we are committed to continuing to fulfill the vision of this Park and Preserve.

The Ocmulgee River is a special place, recognized by the National Park Service as one of America's most important and significant wildlife habitat corridors, tribally significant landscapes, and archaeological sites with the opportunity of creating the first and only National Park and Preserve in Georgia. The legislation to create the Park and Preserve unit is carefully tailored to the recommendations of the National Park Service's Special Resource Study and has broad local support across varying fields, interests, and political ideologies. Conserving the series of ecological and cultural assets as a National Park and Preserve is vital to the region. It will serve as a robust form of long term and stable economic development for the Middle Georgia region, enhance climate resilience for local ecosystems by preserving biodiversity hotspots, which are most effective in larger contiguous landscapes, offer an avenue for co-management between the tribal, state and federal land managers, and constitute one of the largest potential expansions of public hunting and fishing access in Georgia.

The Muscogee (Creek) Nation has been in consultation with the National Historical Park for years due to the significance of the ancestral sites inside the proposed boundary. But as landowners in the corridor as well their long-standing commitment to the stewardship of the corridor, common practices of co-management at other units around the country, this Park and Preserve legislation would create a path toward co-management to be agreed upon by all land managers.

In addition to the Muscogee (Creek) cultural sites, the wildlife habitat along the Ocmulgee has also remained unspoiled. The opportunity for connectivity is uniquely possible because so many private and public parcels are already protected along the corridor. Included is the 6,500-acre Bond Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, part of roughly 85,000 acres of contiguous swamp, the largest block of forested habitat in the upper coastal plain. The park sits on the banks of the Ocmulgee River on the Macon Plateau along the Fall Line, the edge of a prehistoric sea and geological boundary that separates the hills of the Piedmont and the flatlands of the Atlantic coastal plain.

Further, the economic impact of the park and preserve cannot be overstated. A study conducted by the National Parks Conservation Association estimates that the proposed National Park and Preserve will have a tremendous economic impact along the corridor. The study estimates that over the course of 15 years

the region's municipalities can expect a collective increase in tax revenue annually of \$29.8 Million because of the projected \$206.7 Million of total economic activity generated from the Park and Preserve.

Lastly, one of the key economic engines of Middle Georgia is Robins Air Force Base (RAFB) in Warner Robins. This Park and Preserve will potentially offer a quality of life increase for the communities housed on base and the live in the region. It will also allow partners to put land along the Ocmulgee flood plain near the base into conservation, helping stave off encroachment into flight pattern areas. Future development in the areas east of the base is important to protect against incompatible land use. Conserving undeveloped lands within the Ocmulgee River Corridor will help the base continue to fulfill our national security missions, which is vital to the economic vitality of the entire Middle Georgia region.

Land abutting Robins AFB is vacant and mostly undeveloped. Legislation creating the National Park and Preserve will potentially allow RAFB, and park partners to leverage the Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program to protect the environs inside their REPI boundary and inside the expanded Preserve boundary. It is for this reason that the Sustainability Plan for RAFB formally recommends the creation of the National Park and Preserve.

To continue the robust effort of creating full connectivity of the corridor, we fully support the passage of legislation during the 118th Congress to establish and create the first and only National Park and Preserve in Georgia. By protecting this landscape, working with the Muscogee (Creek) Nation as co-managers of their ancestral homeland, preserving the diverse wildlife habitat, protecting and increasing access to public hunting, fishing, and wildlife habitat, and increases name recognition and thereby national and international prominence of this treasure, this legislation will finally allow the Middle Georgia, local and national conservationist, the hunting and angling, and Muscogee (Creek) communities to preserve the corridor for generations to come.

As stewards of the corridor, it is up to us to fulfill the vision of a fully connected and conserved corridor, but we cannot continue to do so without swift federal action from Congress. That is why we support the passage of federal legislation in the 118th Congress. Every year that goes by without action, we risk future development, lost cultural sites, and missed opportunities for significant economic development in the beloved region of Middle Georgia. As a region

and partnership, we have been preparing for this moment and are ready to rise to the challenge of filling the proposed boundary.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dan Perdue". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Dan" and last name "Perdue" clearly distinguishable.

Dan Perdue, Chairman
Houston County Board of Commissioners



February 14, 2024

Honorable Senator Joe Manchin III

Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
306 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Senator Angus King, Jr.

Chairman
Subcommittee on National Parks
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
133 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Senator John Barrasso

Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
307 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Senator Steve Daines

Ranking Member
Subcommittee on National Parks
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
320 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC, 20510

Honorable Chairmen and Ranking Members,

On behalf of the Development of Houston County Board of Directors, I am writing to support the swift passage of legislation to create the Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve in the 118th Congress, to express gratitude for the federal efforts to meet this moment after almost a century of civic advocacy, and to acknowledge that we are committed to continuing to fulfill the vision of this Park and Preserve.

The Ocmulgee River is a special place, recognized by the National Park Service as one of America's most important and significant wildlife habitat corridors, tribally significant landscapes, and archaeological sites with the opportunity of creating the first and only National Park and Preserve in Georgia. The legislation to create the Park and Preserve unit is carefully tailored to the recommendations of the National Park Service's Special Resource Study and has broad local support across varying fields, interests, and political ideologies.

Conserving the series of ecological and cultural assets as a National Park and Preserve is vital to the region. It will serve as a robust form of long term and stable economic development for the Middle Georgia region, enhance climate resilience for local ecosystems by preserving biodiversity hotspots, which are most effective in larger contiguous landscapes, offer an avenue for co-management between the tribal, state and federal land managers, and constitute one of the largest potential expansions of public hunting and fishing access in Georgia.

The Muscogee (Creek) Nation has been in consultation with the National Historical Park for years due to the significance of the ancestral sites inside the proposed boundary. But as landowners in the corridor as well their long-standing commitment to the stewardship of the corridor, common practices of co-management at other units around the country, this Park and Preserve legislation would create a path toward co-management to be agreed upon by all land managers.

In addition to the Muscogee (Creek) cultural sites, the wildlife habitat along the Ocmulgee has also remained unspoiled. The opportunity for connectivity is uniquely possible because so many private and public parcels are already protected along the corridor. Included is the 6,500-acre Bond Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, part of roughly 85,000 acres of contiguous swamp, the largest block of forested habitat in the upper coastal plain. The park sits on the banks of the Ocmulgee River on the Macon Plateau along the Fall Line, the edge of a prehistoric sea and geological boundary that separates the hills of the Piedmont and the flatlands of the Atlantic coastal plain.

Further, the economic impact of the park and preserve cannot be overstated. A study conducted by the National Parks Conservation Association estimates that the proposed National Park and Preserve will have a tremendous economic impact along the corridor. The study estimates that over the course of 15 years the region's municipalities can expect a collective increase in tax revenue annually of \$29.8 Million because of the projected \$206.7 Million of total economic activity generated from the Park and Preserve.

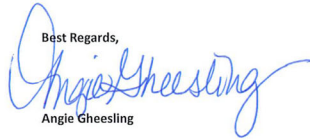
Lastly, one of the key economic engines of Middle Georgia is Robins Air Force Base (RAFB) in Warner Robins. This Park and Preserve will potentially offer a quality of life increase for the communities housed on base and the live in the region. It will also allow partners to put land along the Ocmulgee flood plain near the base into conservation, helping stave off encroachment into flight pattern areas. Future development in the areas east of the base is important to protect against incompatible land use. Conserving undeveloped lands within the Ocmulgee River Corridor will help the base continue to fulfill our national security missions, which is vital to the economic vitality of the entire Middle Georgia region.

Land abutting Robins AFB is vacant and mostly undeveloped. Legislation creating the National Park and Preserve will potentially allow RAFB, and park partners to leverage the Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program to protect the environs inside their REPI boundary and inside the expanded Preserve boundary. It is for this reason that the Sustainability Plan for RAFB formally recommends the creation of the National Park and Preserve.

To continue the robust effort of creating full connectivity of the corridor, we fully support the passage of legislation during the 118th Congress to establish and create the first and only National Park and Preserve in Georgia. By protecting this landscape, working with the Muscogee (Creek) Nation as co-managers of their ancestral homeland, preserving the diverse wildlife habitat, protecting and increasing access to public hunting, fishing, and wildlife habitat, and increases name recognition and thereby national and international prominence of this treasure, this legislation will finally allow the Middle Georgia, local and national conservationist, the hunting and angling, and Muscogee (Creek) communities to preserve the corridor for generations to come.

As stewards of the corridor, it is up to us to fulfill the vision of a fully connected and conserved corridor, but we cannot continue to do so without swift federal action from Congress. That is why we support the passage of federal legislation in the 118th Congress. Every year that goes by without action, we risk future development, lost cultural sites, and missed opportunities for significant economic development in the beloved region of Middle Georgia. As a region and partnership, we have been preparing for this moment and are ready to rise to the challenge of filling the proposed boundary.

Best Regards,



Angie Gheesling

Executive Director



The INTER-TRIBAL COUNCIL of the FIVE CIVILIZED TRIBES

A Resolution Supporting the Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve Establishment Act

Resolution No. 24-11



Chuck Hoskin Jr.
Principal Chief



Bill Anoatubby
Governor



Gary Botton
Chief



David W. Hill
Principal Chief



Lewis J. Johnson
Principal Chief

WHEREAS, the Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes (ITC) is an organization that unites the tribal governments of the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee (Creek) and Seminole Nation, representing approximately 815,000 Indian people throughout the United States; and

WHEREAS, the ITC represents the largest federally recognized body of descendants of the original inhabitants of the Southeast region of the United States; and

WHEREAS, the ITC strongly supports actions of its member Nations to preserve and protect historic properties, Traditional Cultural Places (TCP), and sacred lands within respective ancestral homelands in the American Southeast; and

WHEREAS, the ITC previously supported legislation and the expansion of the Ocmulgee National Monument boundary in Resolution Number 14-31 (2014); and the expansion of the Ocmulgee Mounds National Historical Park to form a new National Park and Preserve in Resolution Number 22-21 (2022); and

WHEREAS, the ITC fully supports the Ocmulgee Mounds Park and Preserve Establishment Act, which is legislation that was introduced to Congress on April 30, 2024, by U.S. Senators Jon Ossoff and Reverend Raphael Warnock, alongside Congressman Sanford D. Bishop, Jr., and Congressman Austin Scott; and

WHEREAS, the Ocmulgee Mounds National Historical Park and the Ocmulgee River Corridor make up the Macon Plateau and Ocmulgee 'Old Fields', which is the ancestral homelands of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and represents over 12,000 years of continuous human history, including monumental Muskogean earthworks such as the 55-foot-high Great Temple Mound and the thousand-year-old Earth Lodge council house; and

WHEREAS, the Ocmulgee River Corridor remains largely undeveloped and is a biodiversity hotspot in which conservation is needed to retain the natural landscape, protect wildlife habitat, Native flora and fauna, threatened and endangered species, and delicate ecosystems such as swamps, marshes, wetlands, and backland prairies; and

WHEREAS, Congressional approval of the Ocmulgee Mounds Park and Preserve Establishment Act will develop the Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and

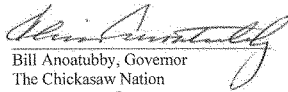
The INTER-TRIBAL COUNCIL of the FIVE CIVILIZED TRIBES

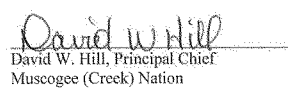
Preserve Advisory Council to develop recommendations to the Secretary of the Interior for Tribal Co-management in federal decision making, including land management, species management, and the interpretation of cultural resources in a Tribal Co-Management Agreement with the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, not precluding Tribal Consultation with all federally recognized Tribal Nations who have cultural interest in the Ocmulgee Mounds Park and Preserve boundary.

NOW THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT, the Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes hereby supports the Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve Establishment Act to create Georgia's first National Park.

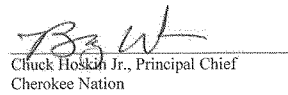
CERTIFICATION

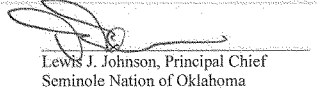
The foregoing resolution was adopted by the Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes meeting in Catoosa, Oklahoma on this 12th day of July 2024, by a vote of 22 for 0 against and 0 abstentions.


Bill Anoatubby, Governor
The Chickasaw Nation


David W. Hill, Principal Chief
Muscogee (Creek) Nation


Gary Batton, Chief
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma


Chuck Hoskin Jr., Principal Chief
Cherokee Nation


Lewis J. Johnson, Principal Chief
Seminole Nation of Oklahoma

February 14, 2024

Honorable Senator Joe Manchin III

Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
306 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Senator Angus King, Jr.

Chairman
Subcommittee on National Parks
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
133 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Senator John Barrasso

Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
307 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Senator Steve Daines

Ranking Member
Subcommittee on National Parks
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
320 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC, 20510

Honorable Chairmen and Ranking Members,

We are writing to support the swift passage of legislation to create the Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve in the 118th Congress, to express gratitude for the federal efforts to meet this moment after almost a century of civic advocacy, and to acknowledge that we are committed to continuing to fulfill the vision of this Park and Preserve.

The Ocmulgee River is a special place, recognized by the National Park Service as one of America's most important and significant wildlife habitat corridors, tribally significant landscapes, and archaeological sites with the opportunity of creating the first and only National Park and Preserve in Georgia. The legislation to create the Park and Preserve unit is carefully tailored to the recommendations of the National Park Service's Special Resource Study and has broad local support across varying fields, interests, and political ideologies.

Conserving the series of ecological and cultural assets as a National Park and Preserve is vital to the region. It will serve as a robust form of long term and stable economic



2024

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AUTHORITY**

Kevin T. Brown

Seyfarth Shaw, LLP

439 Mulberry St.
Macon, Georgia 31201
(478) 200-1420
www.mbcia.com

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development for the Middle Georgia region, enhance climate resilience for local ecosystems by preserving biodiversity hotspots, which are most effective in larger contiguous landscapes, offer an avenue for co-management between the tribal, state and federal land managers, and constitute one of the largest potential expansions of public hunting and fishing access in Georgia.

The Muscogee (Creek) Nation has been in consultation with the National Historical Park for years due to the significance of the ancestral sites inside the proposed boundary. But as landowners in the corridor as well their long-standing commitment to the stewardship of the corridor, common practices of co-management at other units around the country, this Park and Preserve legislation would create a path toward co-management to be agreed upon by all land managers.

In addition to the Muscogee (Creek) cultural sites, the wildlife habitat along the Ocmulgee has also remained unspoiled. The opportunity for connectivity is uniquely possible because so many private and public parcels are already protected along the corridor. Included is the 6,500-acre Bond Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, part of roughly 85,000 acres of contiguous swamp, the largest block of forested habitat in the upper coastal plain. The park sits on the banks of the Ocmulgee River on the Macon Plateau along the Fall Line, the edge of a prehistoric sea and geological boundary that separates the hills of the Piedmont and the flatlands of the Atlantic coastal plain.

Further, the economic impact of the park and preserve cannot be overstated. A study conducted by the National Parks Conservation Association estimates that the proposed National Park and Preserve will have a tremendous economic impact along the corridor. The study estimates that over the course of 15 years the region's municipalities can expect a collective increase in tax revenue annually of \$29.8 Million because of the projected \$206.7 Million of total economic activity generated from the Park and Preserve.

Lastly, one of the key economic engines of Middle Georgia is Robins Air Force Base (RAFB) in Warner Robins. This Park and Preserve will potentially offer a quality of life increase for the communities housed on base and the live in the region. It will also allow partners to put land along the Ocmulgee flood plain near the base into conservation, helping stave off encroachment into flight pattern areas. Future development in the areas east of the base is important to protect against incompatible land use. Conserving undeveloped lands within the Ocmulgee River Corridor will help the base continue to fulfill our national security missions, which is vital to the economic vitality of the entire Middle Georgia region.

Land abutting Robins AFB is vacant and mostly undeveloped. Legislation creating the National Park and Preserve will potentially allow RAFB, and park partners to leverage the Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program to protect the environs inside their REPI boundary and inside the expanded Preserve boundary. It is for this reason that the Sustainability Plan for RAFB formally recommends the creation of the National Park and Preserve.



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Macon, Georgia 31201
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To continue the robust effort of creating full connectivity of the corridor, we fully support the passage of legislation during the 118th Congress to establish and create the first and only National Park and Preserve in Georgia. By protecting this landscape, working with the Muscogee (Creek) Nation as co-managers of their ancestral homeland, preserving the diverse wildlife habitat, protecting and increasing access to public hunting, fishing, and wildlife habitat, and increases name recognition and thereby national and international prominence of this treasure, this legislation will finally allow the Middle Georgia, local and national conservationist, the hunting and angling, and Muscogee (Creek) communities to preserve the corridor for generations to come.

As stewards of the corridor, it is up to us to fulfill the vision of a fully connected and conserved corridor, but we cannot continue to do so without swift federal action from Congress. That is why we support the passage of federal legislation in the 118th Congress. Every year that goes by without action, we risk future development, lost cultural sites, and missed opportunities for significant economic development in the beloved region of Middle Georgia. As a region and partnership, we have been preparing for this moment and are ready to rise to the challenge of filling the proposed boundary.

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Regards



Robert E. Fountain, Jr.

Chairman




2024

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James A. Epps, Jr., Chairman

Laura M. Mathis, Executive Director

**A RESOLUTION OF THE MIDDLE GEORGIA REGIONAL COMMISSION URGING THE
UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO ADOPT THAT LEGISLATION KNOWN AS THE
“OCMULGEE MOUNDS NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE ESTABLISHMENT ACT”**

- WHEREAS:** The Ocmulgee Mounds in Macon, Georgia, contain evidence of over 12,000 years of continuous human habitation, and served as a central gathering point for native tribes throughout the region; and
- WHEREAS:** The handmade earthen mounds located along the Ocmulgee River served as meeting spaces, burial mounds, and other ceremonial sites that were central components of the occupants' cultures and daily lives; and
- WHEREAS:** In the 1820s and 1830s, the inhabitants of these sacred sites were forcibly removed from their ancestral homes to the territory now known as Oklahoma; and
- WHEREAS:** The Macon-Bibb County Commission has made a conscientious effort to reestablish and build relationships with the descendants of those members of the Muscogee (Creek) tribe that were forcibly removed from the land now known as Macon-Bibb County; and
- WHEREAS:** In furtherance of those efforts, the Macon-Bibb County Commission has taken several measures to promote the efforts of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and its people in Macon-Bibb County, and to support their official interests, and to acknowledge the significance that the lands now constituting Macon-Bibb County have to its ancestors and to its people today; and
- WHEREAS:** The Middle Georgia Regional Commission identified the Ocmulgee National Monument as an important heritage resource in the 2010 and 2024 Middle Georgia Regionally Important Resources Plan citing its value as a significant archeological, historical, and natural resource for the world; and
- WHEREAS:** The Middle Georgia Regional Commission supported the work of the National Parks Conservation Association which evaluated the economic impact of a proposed Ocmulgee National Park and Preserve in 2017 determining that the designation as a Park and Preserve could add \$206 million annually to the middle Georgia economy; and

Resolution on Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve
May 9, 2024

WHEREAS: The Middle Georgia Regional Commission supported the National Park Services to complete the Ocmulgee River Corridor Special Resource in 2023 which evaluated lands in Bleckley, Houston, Macon-Bibb, Pulaski and Twiggs Counties and determined that the area possesses natural and cultural resources that are nationally significant.

WHEREAS: Establishing the Ocmulgee Mounds National Historical Park as the Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and creating the Ocmulgee Mounds National Preserve, including the co-management of both by the tribe, would guarantee the preservation, and protection of the millennia of culture and relics contained in these sites for the education and enjoyment of current and future generations; and

WHEREAS: If passed, the Middle Georgia Regional Commission will be a member of the Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve Advisory Council, which will advise the Secretary of the Interior in the development and implementation of a management plan for the Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve; and

WHEREAS: The Middle Georgia Regional Commission understands and values the importance of working regionally to maximize the protection, educational and economic benefits of the Ocmulgee National Monument and Ocmulgee River corridor; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Middle Georgia Regional Commission reaffirms its commitment to promote the efforts of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation and its people in Macon-Bibb County, to support their official interests, and to acknowledge the significance that the lands now constituting Macon-Bibb County have to its ancestors and to its people today.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Middle Georgia Regional Commission specifically urges the United States Congress to pass the Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve Establishment Act, being House Bill No. 8182 and Senate Bill No. 4216 in the current session of the 118th Congress; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Middle Georgia Regional Commission specifically urges President Joe Biden to sign the Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve Establishment Act into law promptly upon passage by the Congress; and

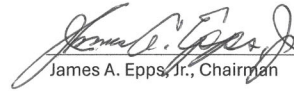
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to each member of the Congressional delegation representing the State of Georgia; to Speaker Mike Johnson of the United States Congress, to Vice President Kamala Harris of the United States, to United States President Joe Biden, to Principal Chief David Hill of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, and to all others who might support the policies and positions adopted herein; and

Resolution on Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve
May 9, 2024

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Middle Georgia Regional Commission grants the Executive Director and the Council Chair the authority to take any and all further actions necessary to carry out the intents and purposes of this Resolution.

Certificate of Passage

I hereby certify that the above and foregoing resolution was duly adopted by the Middle Georgia Regional Commission in regular session assembled on the 9th day of May 2024 and recorded in the official minutes of the Middle Georgia Regional Commission.


James A. Epps, Jr., Chairman

ATTEST: 
Laura M. Mathis, Executive Director



Muscogee (CREEK) Nation

Executive Office

April 25, 2024

Hon. Joe Manchin III, Chairman
Hon. John Barrasso, Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Energy and
Natural Resources
304 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

Hon. Bruce Westerman, Chairman
Hon. Raul Grijalva, Ranking Member
House Natural Resources Committee
1324 Longworth HOB
Washington DC, 20515

RE: Approval of Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve Bill

Dear Chairman Manchin, Ranking Member Barrasso, Chairman Westerman, and Ranking Member Grijalva,

The Muscogee (Creek) Nation has worked closely with Senators Ossoff and Warnock and Representatives Scott and Bishop to help develop and review the draft Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve Bill. We are in full support of the draft text and proposed boundary of the Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve unit. We are thrilled to see this bill introduced and stand ready to support this legislation every step of the way.

It has been a privilege and honor to collaborate these Senators, Members, and their staff to establish Georgia's first National Park and Preserve. The Ocmulgee Mounds, Ocmulgee River, and all of middle Georgia hold historical significance to The Muscogee (Creek) Nation. We are ready to help preserve and co-manage the land which holds the rich cultural history, natural resources, and recreational opportunities that a National Park and Preserve will bring to Georgia. We urge you, as the leaders of the committees of jurisdiction in the Senate and House, to act as quickly as is possible to move this legislation through Committee once it is introduced.

Mvto.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "David W. Hill". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David W. Hill
Principal Chief



1270 Caroline St, Suite D120-357, Atlanta, GA 30307
www.nature.org/georgia

May 9, 2024

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McInaney

Catherine Lautenbacher

James Marlow

Joanne Mello

Aaron Mitchell

Carlos Pagoaga

Nick Vrolijk

Jeannie Wright

Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

The Honorable Joe Manchin – Chairman

The Honorable John Barrasso – Ranking Member

U.S. Senate

Washington, DC 20510

Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, Subcommittee on
National Parks

The Honorable Angus King – Chairman

The Honorable Steve Daines – Ranking Member

U.S. Senate

Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Chairmen and Ranking Members:

We request your support in securing swift passage by the 118th Congress of S. 4216, the Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve Establishment Act. The Nature Conservancy is proud to support this bipartisan effort that will provide valuable cultural, economic, and environmental benefits for Georgia and beyond. We are grateful to all who have worked to bring the vision of this Park and Preserve to life, and we remain committed to making this vision a reality.

The Nature Conservancy collaborates with partners in more than 70 countries worldwide to conserve the lands and waters that sustain us all. Georgia has been an important focus of our efforts for more than 60 years, and the Ocmulgee River corridor has been among our top priorities for conservation.

The Ocmulgee River is recognized by the National Park Service for its importance as a wildlife habitat corridor and a tribally significant landscape. The legislation to create the Park and Preserve addresses the recommendations of the National Park Service's Special Resource Study and has broad local support across varying fields, interests, and political ideologies.

Conserving these ecological and cultural assets in Middle Georgia as a National Park and Preserve will provide long-term economic development for the region and enhance local ecosystem resilience by preserving biodiversity hotspots. Through co-management by tribal, state and federal land managers, it constitutes one of the largest potential expansions of public hunting and fishing access in Georgia.

The Muscogee (Creek) Nation has been in consultation with the National Historical Park for years due to the significance of the ancestral sites inside the proposed boundary. We applaud the intent in this Park and Preserve legislation to create a path toward co-management to be agreed upon by all land managers.

In addition to the Muscogee (Creek) cultural sites, the significance of the Ocmulgee as a vital wildlife corridor cannot be overstated. The park sits on the banks of the Ocmulgee River on the Macon Plateau along the Fall Line, the edge of a prehistoric sea and geological boundary that separates the hills of the Piedmont and the flatlands of the Atlantic coastal plain. Establishing the Park and Preserve will build upon the opportunity for connectivity that is aided by the fact that many private and public parcels are already protected along the corridor, including the 6,500-acre Bond Swamp National Wildlife Refuge.

The economic impact of the Park and Preserve will be significant. A study conducted by the National Parks Conservation Association estimates that the proposed National Park and Preserve will have a tremendous economic impact along the corridor. The study estimates that over the course of 15 years the region's municipalities can expect a collective increase in tax revenue annually of \$29.8 million resulting from the projected \$206.7 million of total economic activity generated from the Park and Preserve.

One of the key economic engines of Middle Georgia is Robins Air Force Base (RAFB) in Warner Robins. This Park and Preserve will boost recreation opportunities for the communities housed on base and in the region. It will also allow partners to put land along the Ocmulgee flood plain near the base into conservation, helping stave off encroachment into flight pattern areas. Conserving undeveloped lands within the Ocmulgee River corridor will help the base maintain its military readiness to safeguard our national security.

The Nature Conservancy urges all Members of Congress to support this bipartisan effort that will yield so many benefits for our communities, our wildlife, our cultural heritage, and our military readiness. We thank you for your help in ensuring that the 118th Congress passes S. 4216 to create the first and only National Park and Preserve in Georgia.

Sincerely,



Monica Thornton
Georgia Executive Director



Bailey Izard
Chair, Georgia Board of Trustees



NEWTOWNMACON.COM

(478) 722-9909

555 POPLAR STREET, MACON, GEORGIA 31201

February 13, 2024

Honorable Senator Joe Manchin III
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
306 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Senator Angus King, Jr.
Chairman
Subcommittee on National Parks
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
133 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Senator John Barrasso
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
307 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Senator Steve Daines
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on National Parks
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
320 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC, 20510

Honorable Chairmen and Ranking Members:

I am writing to support the swift passage of legislation to create the Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve in the 118th Congress, to express gratitude for the federal efforts to meet this moment after almost a century of civic advocacy, and to acknowledge that we are committed to continuing to fulfill the vision of this Park and Preserve. NewTown Macon is a nonprofit founded in 1998 to revitalize downtown Macon, and designation of this park is a key tenet of our current strategic plan. The Ocmulgee National Park is not only well-deserved; it is the single greatest act available to Congress to cultivate Macon's culture and economy for the next generation.

The Ocmulgee River is a special place, recognized by the National Park Service as one of America's most important and significant wildlife habitat corridors, tribally significant landscapes, and archaeological sites with the opportunity of creating the first and only National Park and Preserve in Georgia. The legislation to create the Park and Preserve unit is carefully tailored to the recommendations of the National Park Service's Special Resource Study and has broad local support across varying fields, interests, and political ideologies. Conserving the series of ecological and cultural assets as a National Park and Preserve is vital to the region.

It will serve as a robust form of long-term and stable economic development for the Middle Georgia region, enhance climate resilience for local ecosystems by preserving biodiversity hotspots, which are most effective in larger contiguous landscapes, offer an avenue for co-management between the tribal, state and federal land managers, and constitute one of the largest potential expansions of public hunting and fishing access in Georgia.

The Muscogee (Creek) Nation has been in consultation with the National Historical Park for years due to the significance of the ancestral sites inside the proposed boundary. But as landowners in the corridor as well their long-standing commitment to the stewardship of the corridor, common practices of co-management at other units around the country, this Park and Preserve legislation would create a path toward co-management to be agreed upon by all land managers.

In addition to the Muscogee (Creek) cultural sites, the wildlife habitat along the Ocmulgee has also remained unspoiled. The opportunity for connectivity is uniquely possible because so many private and public parcels are already protected along the corridor. Included is the 6,500-acre Bond Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, part of roughly 85,000 acres of contiguous swamp, the largest block of forested habitat in the upper coastal plain. The park sits on the banks of the Ocmulgee River on the Macon Plateau along the Fall Line, the edge of a prehistoric sea and geological boundary that separates the hills of the Piedmont and the flatlands of the Atlantic coastal plain.

Further, the economic impact of the park and preserve cannot be overstated. A study conducted by the National Parks Conservation Association estimates that the proposed National Park and Preserve will have a tremendous economic impact along the corridor. The study estimates that over the course of 15 years the region's municipalities can expect a collective increase in tax revenue annually of \$29.8 Million because of the projected \$206.7 Million of total economic activity generated from the Park and Preserve. Lastly, one of the key economic engines of Middle Georgia is Robins Air Force Base (RAFB) in Warner Robins. This Park and Preserve will potentially offer a quality of life increase for the communities housed on base and live in the region. It will also allow partners to put land along the Ocmulgee floodplain near the base into conservation, helping stave off encroachment into flight pattern areas. Future development in the areas east of the base is important to protect against incompatible land use. Conserving undeveloped lands within the Ocmulgee River Corridor will help the base continue to fulfill our national security missions, which is vital to the economic vitality of the entire Middle Georgia region.

Land abutting Robins AFB is vacant and mostly undeveloped. Legislation creating the National Park and Preserve will potentially allow RAFB, and park partners to leverage the Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program to protect the environs inside their REPI boundary and inside the expanded Preserve boundary. It is for this reason that the Sustainability Plan for RAFB formally recommends the creation of the National Park and Preserve.



To continue the robust effort of creating full connectivity of the corridor, we fully support the passage of legislation during the 118th Congress to establish and create the first and only National Park and Preserve in Georgia. By protecting this landscape, working with the Muscogee (Creek) Nation as co-managers of their ancestral homeland, preserving the diverse wildlife habitat, protecting and increasing access to public hunting, fishing, and wildlife habitat, and increases name recognition and thereby national and international prominence of this treasure, this legislation will finally allow the Middle Georgia, local and national conservationist, the hunting and angling, and Muscogee (Creek) communities to preserve the corridor for generations to come.

As stewards of the corridor, it is up to us to fulfill the vision of a fully connected and conserved corridor, but we cannot continue to do so without swift federal action from Congress. That is why we support the passage of federal legislation in the 118th Congress. Every year that goes by without action, we risk future development, lost cultural sites, and missed opportunities for significant economic development in the beloved region of Middle Georgia. As a region and partnership, we have been preparing for this moment and are ready to rise to the challenge of filling the proposed boundary. On behalf of our Board of Directors and Staff, I encourage you to pass this bill, and stand ready to answer your questions and comments. I am,

Sincerely,

Josh Rogers
President & CEO



1425 Market Blvd., Suite 530-324
Roswell, GA 30076
770-355-4002 | SoutheastTourism.org

February 15, 2024

Honorable Senator Joe Manchin III

Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
306 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Senator Angus King, Jr.

Chairman
Subcommittee on National Parks
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
133 Hart Senate Office Building
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Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Senator Steve Daines

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U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
320 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC, 20510

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The Ocmulgee River is a special place, recognized by the National Park Service as one of America's most important and significant wildlife habitat corridors, tribally significant landscapes, and archaeological sites with the opportunity of creating the first and only National Park and Preserve in Georgia. The legislation to create the Park and Preserve unit is carefully tailored to the recommendations of the National Park Service's Special Resource Study and has broad local support across varying fields, interests, and political ideologies.

Conserving the series of ecological and cultural assets as a National Park and Preserve is vital to the region. It will serve as a robust form of long term and stable economic development for the Middle

Georgia region, enhance climate resilience for local ecosystems by preserving biodiversity hotspots, which are most effective in larger contiguous landscapes, offer an avenue for co-management between the tribal, state and federal land managers, and constitute one of the largest potential expansions of public hunting and fishing access in Georgia.

The Muscogee (Creek) Nation has been in consultation with the National Historical Park for years due to the significance of the ancestral sites inside the proposed boundary. But as landowners in the corridor as well their long-standing commitment to the stewardship of the corridor, common practices of co-management at other units around the country, this Park and Preserve legislation would create a path toward co-management to be agreed upon by all land managers.

In addition to the Muscogee (Creek) cultural sites, the wildlife habitat along the Ocmulgee has also remained unspoiled. The opportunity for connectivity is uniquely possible because so many private and public parcels are already protected along the corridor. Included is the 6,500-acre Bond Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, part of roughly 85,000 acres of contiguous swamp, the largest block of forested habitat in the upper coastal plain. The park sits on the banks of the Ocmulgee River on the Macon Plateau along the Fall Line, the edge of a prehistoric sea and geological boundary that separates the hills of the Piedmont and the flatlands of the Atlantic coastal plain.

Further, the economic impact of the park and preserve cannot be overstated. A study conducted by the National Parks Conservation Association estimates that the proposed National Park and Preserve will have a tremendous economic impact along the corridor. The study estimates that over the course of 15 years the region's municipalities can expect a collective increase in tax revenue annually of \$29.8 Million because of the projected \$206.7 Million of total economic activity generated from the Park and Preserve.

As Macon's Destination Marketing Organization, Visit Macon is charged with creating economic opportunities for our small businesses and 4,500 hospitality workers through tourism. The addition of the Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve will enhance opportunities in tourism and small business for underserved communities throughout the region. Visitors to Macon-Bibb County spend over \$400 million annually to support business and our citizens. The economic impact of a National Park and Preserve will benefit all Georgians as well as strengthen the bond with the Muscogee (Creek) Nation that has been rekindled over the past decade.

Lastly, one of the key economic engines of Middle Georgia is Robins Air Force Base (RAFB) in Warner Robins. This Park and Preserve will potentially offer a quality of life increase for the communities housed on base and the live in the region. It will also allow partners to put land along the Ocmulgee flood plain near the base into conservation, helping stave off encroachment into flight pattern areas. Future development in the areas east of the base is important to protect against incompatible land use. Conserving undeveloped lands within the Ocmulgee River Corridor will help the base continue to fulfill our national security missions, which is vital to the economic vitality of the entire Middle Georgia region.

Land abutting Robins AFB is vacant and mostly undeveloped. Legislation creating the National Park and Preserve will potentially allow RAFB, and park partners to leverage the Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program to protect the environs inside their REPI boundary and inside the expanded Preserve boundary. It is for this reason that the Sustainability Plan for RAFB formally recommends the creation of the National Park and Preserve.

To continue the robust effort of creating full connectivity of the corridor, we fully support the passage of legislation during the 118th Congress to establish and create the first and only National Park and Preserve in Georgia. By protecting this landscape, working with the Muscogee (Creek) Nation as co-managers of their ancestral homeland, preserving the diverse wildlife habitat, protecting and increasing access to public hunting, fishing, and wildlife habitat, and increases name recognition and thereby national and international prominence of this treasure, this legislation will finally allow the Middle Georgia, local and national conservationist, the hunting and angling, and Muscogee (Creek) communities to preserve the corridor for generations to come.

As stewards of the corridor, it is up to us to fulfill the vision of a fully connected and conserved corridor, but we cannot continue to do so without swift federal action from Congress. That is why we support the passage of federal legislation in the 118th Congress. Every year that goes by without action, we risk future development, lost cultural sites, and missed opportunities for significant economic development in the beloved region of Middle Georgia. As a region and partnership, we have been preparing for this moment and are ready to rise to the challenge of filling the proposed boundary.

Regards,



Monica R. Smith, CMP, CASE, CDME
President & CEO



GEORGIA COUNCIL of TROUT UNLIMITED

159 Frey Road
Dallas, Ga. 30132
03/18/2024

Honorable Senator Joe Manchin III Chairman U.S. Senate Committee on
Energy and Natural Resources 306 Hart Senate Office Building Washington,
DC 20510

Honorable Senator Angus King, Jr. Chairman Subcommittee on National Parks
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources 133 Hart Senate
Office Building Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Senator John Barrasso Ranking Member U.S. Senate Committee on
Energy and Natural Resources 307 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Senator Steve Daines Ranking Member Subcommittee on National
Parks U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources 320 Hart
Senate Office Building Washington, DC, 20510

Honorable Chairmen and Ranking Members,

My name is Rodney Tumlin and I am the Chairman for the Georgia Council of Trout Unlimited. I represent over 4,000 dues paying members in our state. I am writing you to express my support for the swift passage of legislation to create the Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve in the 118th Congress, and to express gratitude for the federal efforts to meet this moment after almost a century of civic advocacy, and to acknowledge that we are committed to continuing to fulfill the vision of this Park and Preserve.

The Ocmulgee River is a special place, recognized by the National Park Service as one of America's most important and significant wildlife habitat corridors, tribally significant landscapes, and archaeological sites with the opportunity of creating the first and only National Park and Preserve in

Georgia. The legislation to create the Park and Preserve unit is carefully tailored to the recommendations of the National Park Service's Special Resource Study and has broad local support across varying fields, interests, and political ideologies.

Conserving the series of ecological and cultural assets as a National Park and Preserve is vital to the region. It will serve as a robust form of long term and stable economic development for the Middle Georgia region, enhance climate resilience for local ecosystems by preserving biodiversity hotspots, which are most effective in larger contiguous landscapes, offer an avenue for co-management between the tribal, state and federal land managers, and constitute one of the largest potential expansions of public hunting and fishing access in Georgia. The Muscogee (Creek) Nation has been in consultation with the National Historical Park for years due to the significance of the ancestral sites inside the proposed boundary. But as landowners in the corridor as well their long-standing commitment to the stewardship of the corridor, common practices of co-management at other units around the country, this Park and Preserve legislation would create a path toward co-management to be agreed upon by all land managers. In addition to the Muscogee (Creek) cultural sites, the wildlife habitat along the Ocmulgee has also remained unspoiled. The opportunity for connectivity is uniquely possible because so many private and public parcels are already protected along the corridor. Included is the 6,500-acre Bond Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, part of roughly 85,000 acres of contiguous swamp, the largest block of forested habitat in the upper coastal plain. The park sits on the banks of the Ocmulgee River on the Macon Plateau along the Fall Line, the edge of a prehistoric sea and geological boundary that separates the hills of the Piedmont and the flatlands of the Atlantic coastal plain. Further, the economic impact of the park and preserve cannot be overstated. A study conducted by the National Parks Conservation Association estimates that the proposed National Park and Preserve will have a tremendous economic impact along the corridor. The study estimates that over the course of 15 years the region's municipalities can expect a collective increase in tax revenue annually of \$29.8 Million because of the projected \$206.7 Million of total economic activity generated from the Park and Preserve. Lastly, one of the key economic engines of Middle Georgia is Robins Air Force Base (RAFB) in Warner Robins. This Park and Preserve will potentially offer a quality of life increase for the communities housed on base and those that live in the region. It will also allow partners to put land along the Ocmulgee flood plain near the base into conservation, helping stave off encroachment into flight pattern areas. Future development in the areas east of the base is important to protect against incompatible land use. Conserving undeveloped lands within the Ocmulgee

River Corridor will help the base continue to fulfill our national security missions, which is vital to the economic vitality of the entire Middle Georgia region. Land abutting Robins AFB is vacant and mostly undeveloped. Legislation creating the National Park and Preserve will potentially allow RAFB, and park partners to leverage the Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program to protect the environs inside their REPI boundary and inside the expanded Preserve boundary. It is for this reason that the Sustainability Plan for RAFB formally recommends the creation of the National Park and Preserve. To continue the robust effort of creating full connectivity of the corridor, we fully support the passage of legislation during the 118th Congress to establish and create the first and only National Park and Preserve in Georgia. By protecting this landscape, working with the Muscogee (Creek) Nation as co-managers of their ancestral homeland, preserving the diverse wildlife habitat, protecting and increasing access to public hunting, fishing, and wildlife habitat, and increases name recognition and thereby national and international prominence of this treasure, this legislation will finally allow the Middle Georgia, local and national conservationist, the hunting and angling, and Muscogee (Creek) communities to preserve the corridor for generations to come.

As stewards of the corridor, it is up to us to fulfill the vision of a fully connected and conserved corridor, but we cannot continue to do so without swift federal action from Congress. That is why we support the passage of federal legislation in the 118th Congress. Every year that goes by without action, we risk future development, lost cultural sites, and missed opportunities for significant economic development in the beloved region of Middle Georgia. As a region and partnership, we have been preparing for this moment and are ready to rise to the challenge of filling the proposed boundary.

Best Regards

Rodney Tumlin



Chairman, Georgia Council of Trout Unlimited



FEBRUARY 14, 2024

Honorable Senator Joe Manchin III
Chairman
Senate Committee on Energy & Natural Resources
306 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Senator Angus King, Jr.
Chairman
Subcommittee on National Parks
Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
133 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Senator John Barrasso
Ranking Member
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307 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

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Ranking Member
Subcommittee on National Parks
Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
320 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Chairmen and Ranking Members,

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The Ocmulgee River is a special place, recognized by the National Park Service as one of America's most important and significant wildlife habitat corridors, tribally significant landscapes, and archaeological sites, now with the opportunity to create the first and only National Park and Preserve in Georgia. The legislation to create the Park and Preserve unit is carefully tailored to the recommendations of the National Park Service's Special Resource Study and has broad local support across varying fields, interests, and political ideologies.

Conserving the series of ecological and cultural assets as a National Park and Preserve is vital to the region. It will serve as a robust form of long term and stable economic development for the Middle Georgia region and enhance climate resilience for local ecosystems by preserving biodiversity hotspots, which are most effective in larger contiguous landscapes. In addition, the National Park and Preserve will offer an avenue for co-management between the tribal, state and federal land managers, and constitute one of the largest potential expansions of public hunting and fishing access in Georgia.

The Muscogee (Creek) Nation has been in consultation with the National Historical Park for years due to the significance of the ancestral sites inside the proposed boundary. But, as fellow landowners in the corridor with a long-standing commitment to the stewardship of the corridor, and with common practices of co-management at other units around the country, this Park and Preserve legislation would create a path toward co-management to be agreed upon by all land managers.

In addition to the Muscogee (Creek) cultural sites, the wildlife habitat along the Ocmulgee has also remained unspoiled. The opportunity for connectivity is uniquely possible because so many private and public parcels are already protected along the corridor. Included is the 6,500-acre Bond Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, part of roughly 85,000 acres of contiguous swamp, the largest block of forested habitat in the upper coastal plain. The park sits on the banks of the Ocmulgee River on the Macon Plateau along the Fall Line, the edge of a prehistoric sea and geological boundary that separates the hills of the Piedmont and the flatlands of the Atlantic coastal plain.

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Lastly, one of the key economic engines of Middle Georgia is Robins Air Force Base (RAFB) in Warner Robins. This Park and Preserve will help improve quality of life for the communities housed on and off base in the region. It will also allow partners to put land along the Ocmulgee flood plain near the base into conservation, helping stave off encroachment into flight pattern areas. Future development in the areas east of the base threatens base operations with incompatible land use. Conserving undeveloped lands within the Ocmulgee River Corridor will help the base continue to fulfill our national security missions, which is vital to the economic vitality of the entire Middle Georgia region.

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As stewards of the corridor, it is up to us to fulfill the vision of a fully connected and conserved corridor, but we cannot continue to do so without swift federal action from Congress. That is why we strongly support the passage of federal legislation in the 118th Congress. Every year that goes by without action, we risk future development, lost cultural sites, and missed opportunities for significant economic development in the beloved region of Middle Georgia. As a region and partnership, we have been preparing for this moment and are ready to rise to the challenge of filling the proposed boundary.

Sincerely,



George Dusenbury
VP of the Southeast



**Development Authority of the City of
Jeffersonville & Twiggs County**

P. O. Box 703 Jeffersonville, GA 31044 Douglas Chance, Chairman

February 13, 2024

Honorable Senator Joe Manchin III
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
306 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Senator Angus King, Jr.
Chairman
Subcommittee on National Parks
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
133 Hart Senate Office Building
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Conserving the series of ecological and cultural assets as a National Park and Preserve is vital to the region and to Twiggs County. It will serve as a robust form of long term and stable economic development for the Middle Georgia region, enhance climate resilience for local ecosystems by preserving biodiversity hotspots, which are most effective in larger contiguous landscapes, offer an avenue for co-management between the tribal, state and federal land managers, and constitute one of the largest potential expansions of public hunting and fishing access in Georgia.

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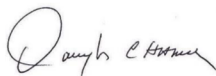
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Sincerely,



Douglas Chance
Chairman



Judith Sherling
Executive Director



+1 (478) 743-1074
visitmacon.org

450 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd
Macon, Georgia 31201

Visit Macon, Inc.
450 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
Macon, GA 31201
February 13, 2024

Honorable Senator Joe Manchin III
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
306 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Senator Angus King, Jr.
Chairman
Subcommittee on National Parks
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
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Regards,

President/CEO

Ogeechee Riverkeeper
PO Box 16206
Savannah, GA 31416

2/13/24

Honorable Senator Joe Manchin III
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
306 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Senator Angus King, Jr.
Chairman
Subcommittee on National Parks
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Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Damon Mullis".

Damon Mullis

Executive Director/Riverkeeper

From: [Antoinette Olesen](#)
To: [fortherecord \(Enerov\)](#); [Teegarden, Tori \(Barrasso\)](#); [Walker, Lahra \(Daines\)](#); [Harbin, Christine \(Cassidy\)](#); [Burks, Jen \(Hirono\)](#); [Plath, Savannah \(Galleo\)](#); [Gustafson, Eric \(Hoeven\)](#); [Chitre, Jui \(Kaine\)](#)
Subject: S.1377 Wild Horse Protection Act Please support W/Amendments
Date: Tuesday, December 16, 2025 10:04:03 PM

I writing you to ask you to please support S.1377 with the amendments submitted by Chasing Horses Wild Horse Advocates. These amendments ensure genetic viability, protect all 200 current horses, and establish a collaborative working group for responsible management.

The world is watching, please don't let our National history and the beauty of our wild horses slip away.

Thank you for supporting the wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

Sincerely,
Antoinette Olesen
6632 Jocelyn Hollow Rd.
Nashville, TN. 37212
(615) 498-2778
time4Nashville@gmail.com

OUTDOOR ALLIANCE

December 9, 2025

Senator Steve Daines
Chair, National Park Subcommittee
Energy and Natural Resources Committee
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Angus S. King Jr.
Ranking Member, National Park Subcommittee
Energy and Natural Resources Committee
Washington, DC 20510

Re: December 9th Subcommittee Hearing to Receive Testimony on Pending Legislation

Chair Daines, Ranking Member King, and members of the Subcommittee:

On behalf of the human-powered outdoor recreation community, thank you for the opportunity to provide input on December 9th's Subcommittee hearing on legislation affecting national parks.

Outdoor Alliance is a coalition of nine member-based organizations representing the human powered outdoor recreation community. The coalition includes Access Fund, American Canoe Association, American Whitewater, International Mountain Bicycling Association, Winter Wildlands Alliance, The Mountaineers, the American Alpine Club, Colorado Mountain Club, and Surfrider Foundation and represents the interests of the millions of Americans who climb, paddle, mountain bike, backcountry ski and snowshoe, and enjoy coastal recreation on our nation's public lands, waters, and snowscapes.

National parks are integral to America's identity, and are home to some of our country's best and most iconic opportunities for outdoor recreation. Outdoor recreation and tourism in and around national parks is also vital to America's outdoor recreation economy, which contributed \$1.2 trillion in gross economic output, supported nearly 5 million jobs, and accounted for 2.3% of U.S. gross





domestic product in 2023.¹ Our community appreciates the Subcommittee's attention to enhancing these recreation experiences and economic benefits. We hope that the Subcommittee will work towards passing a bipartisan package of public lands legislation in the 119th Congress.

Our comments on specific bills are below.

Rim of the Valley Corridor Preservation Act (S. 1870)

Outdoor Alliance supports the Rim of the Valley Corridor Preservation Act, which would expand the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area by 118,000 acres and facilitate more equitable access to outdoor recreation opportunities. The proposed National Recreation Area expansion is based on a six-year study by the National Park Service that considered opportunities to expand public access to nature, protect biodiversity, expand wildlife corridors, and more. The NPS conducted extensive public outreach to local and regional stakeholders throughout the study process before recommending that a significant addition be made to the Santa Monica Mountain National Recreation Area. The NPS now needs Congress to authorize this expansion by passing the Rim of the Valley Corridor Preservation Act.

Importantly, the bill will help facilitate access to the outdoors within and around one of the nation's most populous metropolitan areas. More than half of Los Angeles County, including some of the areas covered by the proposed National Recreation Area Expansion, is considered "park poor," with the vast majority of these areas located in communities of color. Passing the Rim of the Valley Corridor Preservation Act will help expand outdoor access in areas where it is needed the most, while giving the NPS the authority to better facilitate a positive outdoor experience in those areas.

Bonneville Shoreline Trail Feasibility Study Act (S. 1135)

Outdoor Alliance supports S.1135, which would require a feasibility study for designating the Bonneville Shoreline Trail (BST) as a unit of the National Trails System. The BST is a planned multi-use trail following the historic shoreline of

¹ U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, BEA 24-53, Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account, U.S. and States, 2023 (2024).



OUTDOOR ALLIANCE

ancient Lake Bonneville that connects multiple metropolitan areas in the Wasatch Front. The trail is important both in its own regard as a recreation resource, and as a centerpiece around which multiple communities have invested—and plan to invest—in new trail systems. This region-wide connectivity between trail systems is unique. We recommend that the Subcommittee pass S. 1135 to recognize the BST as a National Trail.

Reducing Waste in National Parks Act (S. 1926)

Outdoor Alliance supports the Reducing Waste in National Parks Act, which would task the National Park Service with taking steps to eliminate single-use plastic products in National Parks. Disposable plastic products are a major pollution source affecting the outdoor recreation experience in National Parks, as well as in downstream waterways and oceans. This bill would require the NPS to consider the costs and benefits of eliminating disposable plastic products and take commonsense steps towards reducing or eliminating their use in National Parks where feasible. The NPS estimates that 80 million pounds of municipal solid waste is generated in the parks every year.² S. 1926 would address this significant environmental challenge while continuing the agency's legacy of conservation leadership.

Appalachian Trail Centennial Act (S. 2708)

Outdoor Alliance supports the Appalachian Trail Centennial Act. The Appalachian Trail is one of America's most iconic outdoor recreation experiences and is one of the best known hiking trails in the world. Stewardship of the Trail's nearly 2,200 miles is accomplished through long-running partnerships between federal land managers and local and regional organizations—a model that has been replicated on other National Scenic and Historic Trails throughout the country. S. 2708 would statutorily recognize these partner organizations as Designated Operating Partners (DOPs) and institutionalize their role in stewarding National Trails. The bill would formally designate the Appalachian Trail Conservancy as a DOP for the Appalachian Trail and give the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture authority to designate additional organizations as DOPs. DOPs would be allowed to enter into 20-year

² U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, *Green Parks Plan: Third Edition, Advancing the NPS Mission Through Sustainable Operations* (2023).



OUTDOOR ALLIANCE

contracts with federal agencies to conduct stewardship activities on National Trails. Outdoor Alliance supports this bill, which will enhance the stewardship of the Appalachian Trail, as well as other National Scenic and Historic Trails across the country.

PATRIOT Parks Act (S. 2308)

The Protecting America's Treasures by Raising Inflow from Overseas Tourists (PATRIOT) Parks Act would allow individual National Park System units to establish new fees for international visitors and would require the Secretary of Interior to establish an international visitor fee for the America the Beautiful pass—a change that the Department of Interior recently announced it will be implementing. We appreciate that funds generated from these new fees would go towards individual NPS units (for individual park fees) or towards the National Parks and Public Lands Legacy Restoration Fund (for America the Beautiful pass fees). We are concerned, however, about the mechanics of administering a tiered pricing system and the process for differentiating between domestic and foreign visitors at park entrance stations. Approaches that require frontline staff to verify citizenship or immigration status or process multiple fee schedules could undermine equitable access to public lands, increase congestion at already busy entrance gates, require additional staffing, and undermine the goal of raising revenue with minimal impact on visitors. If Congress chooses to pursue this idea, we encourage exploring implementation strategies that avoid these operational challenges rather than introducing complexity at park entrances.

OHVs in Capitol Reef National Park Act (S. 2970)

Outdoor Alliance opposes the OHVs in Capitol Reef National Park Act, which would allow Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) access to twelve existing roads in Capitol Reef National Park. Currently, Capitol Reef does not allow OHV use inside of its boundaries in order to protect the park's natural, cultural, and recreational values. Allowing OHV access to these roads would increase noise pollution within the Park, and would increase the likelihood of illegal off-road travel by OHVs, which are capable of traveling over a wider variety of terrains than standard motor vehicles. Although the bill's stated intent is to increase access to Capitol Reef for Americans



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with disabilities,³ all twelve of the roads affected by the bill are currently accessible by standard motor vehicles, which enables users of all backgrounds to experience these areas. We recommend that the Subcommittee instead explore where investments in the Park's existing road system and other infrastructure might enhance access for park visitors with disabilities.

A bill to designate a mountain in the State of Alaska as Denali (S. 573)

Outdoor Alliance supports S. 573, which would restore the name Denali to North America's tallest mountain peak. Denali—the name given to the peak by Alaska's Koyukon Athabascans—has been recognized as the official name by the State of Alaska since 1975. Outdoor recreationists of all backgrounds admire Denali for its beauty and grandeur, and achieving its summit is a lifetime goal for many climbers and mountaineers worldwide. We encourage the Committee to pass S. 573 to restore the mountain's rightful name.

* * *

Thank you for considering our community's input. We look forward to working with you to enhance outdoor recreation opportunities at America's national parks.

Best regards,



Louis Geltman
Vice President for Policy and Government Relations
Outdoor Alliance

cc: Adam Cramer, Chief Executive Officer, Outdoor Alliance
Heather Thorne, Executive Director, Access Fund

³ Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee, *Lee, Curtis Introduce Outdoor ADA Alongside Measures to Keep Roads Open for Americans with Disabilities* (Oct. 6, 2025), <https://www.energy.senate.gov/2025/10/lee-curtis-introduce-outdoor-ada-alongside-measures-to-keep-roads-open-for-americans-with-disabilities>.



OUTDOOR ALLIANCE

Beth Spilman, Executive Director, American Canoe Association
 Clinton Begley, Executive Director, American Whitewater
 Kent McNeill, CEO, International Mountain Bicycling Association
 David Page, Executive Director, Winter Wildlands Alliance
 Tom Vogl, Chief Executive Officer, The Mountaineers
 Ben Gabriel, Executive Director, American Alpine Club
 Madeline Bachner Lane, Chief Executive Officer, Colorado Mountain Club
 Chad Nelsen, Chief Executive Officer, Surfrider Foundation



RANKING MEMBER
COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND COMMERCE

FRANK PALLONE, JR.
6TH DISTRICT, NEW JERSEY

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

December 11, 2025

REPLY TO:
2107 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE
BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-4671

504 BROADWAY
LONG BRANCH, NJ 07740
(732) 571-1140

67/69 CHURCH STREET
KILMER SQUARE
NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ 08901
(732) 249-8892
<https://pallone.house.gov/>

The Honorable Mike Lee
Chairman
Senate Committee on Energy and Natural
Resources
304 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Energy and Natural
Resources
304 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich,

Thank you for including my bill, H.R. 249, as a part of the National Park Subcommittee hearing on December 9, 2025.

H.R. 249 would honor the legacy of the late Congressman Bill Pascrell, Jr., by renaming two iconic landmarks at Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park. My bill would rename the Great Falls Scenic Overlook Trail Bridge and Overlook Park as the Bill Pascrell, Jr. Scenic Overlook Trail Bridge and Bill Pascrell, Jr. Overlook Park, respectively, in recognition of Bill's role in securing Paterson Great Falls' designation as a national historical park in 2009. H.R. 249 passed the House with strong bipartisan support on May 13, 2025.

Bill Pascrell embodied the spirit of Paterson – tough, gritty, and always looking out for the little guy. As a public-school teacher, State Assemblyman, Mayor, and Congressman, Bill dedicated his life to public service and never stopped fighting for his hometown. Adding Congressman Pascrell's name to the facilities of Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park is not only fitting but essential to recognizing the legacy he built.

I look forward to the Senate's full consideration of H.R. 249.

Sincerely,



FRANK PALLONE, JR.
Member of Congress

THE PASCRELL FAMILY

December 10, 2025

The Honorable Mike Lee
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Natural
Resources
United States Senate
304 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Natural
Resources
United States Senate
304 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich:

We write to express our appreciation for your committee holding a hearing on H.R. 249, a bill to name two prominent sites at Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park in honor of our family patriarch, the late Congressman Bill Pascrell, Jr. The *Bill Pascrell, Jr. Scenic Overlook Trail Bridge* and the *Bill Pascrell, Jr. Overlook Park* would serve as fitting and enduring tributes to a proud Patersonian who devoted his life to public service and to preserving the city's indispensable role in our nation's industrial history.

Congressman Pascrell's legacy is woven throughout the fabric of Paterson. Throughout his decades in public life—as Education Board Chair, Mayor, State Assemblyman, and Member of Congress—he championed efforts to protect and elevate the Great Falls and recognize its significance as a cradle of American industry and innovation. His tireless advocacy was instrumental in the creation and continued growth of the National Historical Park, ensuring that future generations would understand Paterson's essential contributions to the American story.

The establishment of the *Bill Pascrell, Jr. Scenic Overlook Trail Bridge* and the *Bill Pascrell, Jr. Overlook Park* honors not only his achievements, but also his deep love for his hometown and his vision for a revitalized, accessible, and celebrated Paterson. These sites reflect his commitment to the community he served with passion and integrity, and where he lived his entire life.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to the Senate approving this measure.

Respectfully,

The Pascrell Family

From: [Nina Perino](#)
To: [fortherecord \(Enerov\)](#); [Teegarden, Tori \(Barrasso\)](#); [Walker, Lahra \(Daines\)](#); [Harbin, Christine \(Cassidy\)](#); [Burks, Jen \(Hirono\)](#); [Plath, Savannah \(Gallego\)](#); [Gustafson, Eric \(Hoeven\)](#); [Chitre, Jui \(Kaine\)](#)
Subject: S.1377 — The Theodore Roosevelt National Park Wild Horse Protection Act
Date: Tuesday, December 16, 2025 4:45:50 PM

Good Afternoon Senators,

I am writing to you all today to urge you to please support **S.1377 — The Theodore Roosevelt National Park Wild Horse Protection Act with the requested amendments. I, and thousands and thousands of others, are asking** the Senate to include three essential amendments:

- **Change “genetically diverse” to “genetically viable.”**
This ensures a healthy, sustainable herd long-term.
- **Set herd size to “not fewer than 200” horses.**
This protects every horse currently living in the park.
- **Create a Wild Horse Working Group** with our allies at Chasing Horses Wild Horse Advocates to bring science, history, commerce, and advocacy together while filling major staffing gaps and strengthening community relations

Thank you all for your time and consideration on this very important matter.

Sincerely,
Nina Perino
2678 Megan Ct.
Palm Harbor, FL 34684-4630

--

Nina Perino
Owner, Love All Beings Pet Sitting, LLC
www.loveallbeingspetsitting.com
727-785-9963

From: [DIANE POOLE](#)
To: [fortherecord \(Enerov\)](#); [Teegarden, Tori \(Barrasso\)](#); [Walker, Lahra \(Daines\)](#); [Harbin, Christine \(Cassidy\)](#); [Burks, Jen \(Hirono\)](#); [Plath, Savannah \(Galleo\)](#); [Gustafson, Eric \(Hoeven\)](#); [Chitre, Jui \(Kaine\)](#)
Subject: Please Support S.1377 with Essential Amendments
Date: Tuesday, December 16, 2025 6:07:34 PM

Dear Madam/Sir,
I urge you to support S.1377 with the amendments submitted by Chasing Horses Wild Horse Advocates. These amendments ensure genetic viability, protect all 200 current horses, and establish a collaborative working group for responsible management.
Thank you for supporting the wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park.
Sincerely,
Diane James-Poole
Lowell, MA 01851
djpoole@comcast.net

From: [Gail Richardson](#)
To: [fortherecord \(Enerov\)](#); [Teegarden, Tori \(Barrasso\)](#); [Walker, Lahra \(Daines\)](#); [Harbin, Christine \(Cassidy\)](#); [Burks, Jen \(Hirono\)](#); [Plath, Savannah \(Gallego\)](#); [Gustafson, Eric \(Hoeven\)](#); [Chitre, Jui \(Kaine\)](#)
Subject: Please support S.1377 with essential amendments!
Date: Tuesday, December 16, 2025 7:16:52 PM

I urge you to support S.1377 with the amendments submitted by Chasing Horses Wild Horse Advocates. These amendments ensure genetic viability, protect all 200 current horses, and establish a collaborative working group for responsible management.
Thank you for supporting the wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

Sincerely,

Gail C. Richardson
gailcats@att.net
1535 South Indian Creek Drive
Stone Mountain, Georgia 30083-5426
Phone: 404-277-4012
Fax: 1-888-625-8630



NATIONAL
EMS MEMORIAL
FOUNDATION
Commitment, Service & Sacrifice

Written testimony of James Robinson, Director of the National EMS Memorial Foundation, to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, National Park Subcommittee hearing, December 9, 2025 at 10:00 AM, 366 Dirksen Senate Office Building

Good morning, Chairman Daines and Ranking Member King, as well as to Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich and the esteemed members of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources:

It is truly an honor to present this written testimony and to ask that you support [S. 2546](#), a bill to extend the legislative authority of the National EMS Memorial Foundation (NEMSMF). We thank Senators Schmitt and Coons for introducing the legislation, and all the other cosponsors.

My name is James Robinson and I am a career emergency medical services (EMS) clinician from Colorado. I have spent my entire adult life in public service as a paramedic and EMS leader. In addition to my current role as the Chief of Thompson Valley EMS in Northern Colorado, I have served as a volunteer board member of the National EMS Memorial Foundation since 2011.

Founded in 2007, the spark of National EMS Memorial Foundation was ignited by somber reflections on loss. Annually, there is a weekend of inspiring events honoring EMS providers who pay the ultimate sacrifice in the service of others. The location of these events has changed over the years, and we realized what was, and still is missing; a permanent place for hosting these events, a place for private reflection throughout the year, and public recognition of EMS.

The Foundation's mission is to establish a permanent national memorial in our nation's capital to honor the commitment, service and sacrifice of EMS providers caring for communities across the United States. We are past and current EMS clinicians and family members of EMS providers who have our own stories of loss, of the honor of serving others, and of the miracles of life.

In my EMS career, I have found that we, the helpers, are uncomfortable being on the opposite end of the relationship. We do not like to ask for help. But that is exactly why I am writing to you today - to ask for your help on behalf of the helpers - the men and women of EMS. I, and the rest of the NEMSMF board, ask you to support this bill to extend the Foundation's authorization to build a permanent memorial that will honor their commitment, service and sacrifice.

Across our great nation, EMS providers respond to calls for help twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year in all weather, in all conditions, and at risk of our personal safety--without hesitation. Our rewards are intrinsic, among them being upholding the trust our communities have placed in us to care for them in their times of need. Our dedication to our patients never waivers, as evidenced by the heroic efforts of my EMS colleagues nationwide during the COVID pandemic. We showed up, and kept showing up, despite losing many of our own. I would like to share an example of this sacred trust with you.

As EMS providers, we respond to calls for help in the middle of the night, and are often met by people in sleeping attire or bathrobes, and hurried into their homes because *they trust that we are going to help them*. They don't know us, never ask us if we are appropriately certified, have been trained properly, or if we have undergone criminal background checks--*they trust that we are going to help them*. In the course of our medical history taking and physical examinations, we often ask them highly personal questions they would not answer for their own family members or closest confidants. We put our hands on their bodies to perform physical exams and expose their bodies for visualize injuries. Our patients let us do these things because *they trust that we are going to help them*. We understand the significance of this trust and upholding it is primary to what we do.

The Foundation was authorized to build a permanent commemorative work in the national capital environs through Public Law 115-275, passed unanimously in both chambers in the 117th Congress and signed into law during President Trump's first term on November 3, 2018. Since its initial authorization, the Foundation has made great strides toward our goal. However, circumstances beyond our control, particularly the COVID pandemic, slowed the process and we simply need more time to obtain final approvals and to move the project forward through the next steps as outlined in the Commemorative Works Act (CWA).

As members of this committee are aware, a CWA authorization establishes a seven-year deadline by which construction must begin, or the authorization will lapse. We had great momentum this fall, but encountered a minor setback when our authorization lapsed during the recent government shutdown. We are excited to again be charging ahead. Please know that we are not outliers in seeking an extension to continue our efforts, as it is actually fairly standard that organizations authorized for the purposes of constructing a memorial in the National Capital region need an extension, often more than one.

To that end, the bill you are considering today, [S. 2546](#), and its House companion, [H.R. 2196](#), are necessary for us to continue the efforts to build a place to appropriately honor the commitment, service and sacrifice of EMS providers here in Washington.

The Foundation has conducted an extensive site evaluation, narrowing site selection from 312 potential sites to three based on siting guidelines laid out in the CWA, and are awaiting final approval for our preferred location. This site, a section of the plaza of Hubert H. Humphrey Building (HHS Headquarters) bordered by Independence Avenue SW and 3rd Street SW, is the optimum site for the memorial. It was chosen partially because of the Department of Health and Human Services' and its predecessor, the Department of Health, Education and Welfare's historical nexus to the origins of organized EMS in the United States.

Upon determining the site, the Foundation advanced through the site approval and design approval processes as established in the CWA. Per the CWA, a site must be approved by the National Capital Memorial Advisory Committee (NCMAC) and the site and design must be approved by the Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) and the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC). All three expressed no opposition to the preferred site. On Monday, May 12th of this year, we presented to the National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission (NCMAC) regarding extending our authorization, and gained unanimous support from the commissioners. The National Park Service also supports an extension.

We have broad support for our efforts in the EMS community and among our partners in the first response community. Despite the impacts of the COVID pandemic on the Foundation as active EMS providers, and on the bureaucratic processes here in Washington, we are poised to enter the next phase of the Commemorative Works Act with this reauthorization, and ask for your support for [S. 2546](#) to extend the authorization of the National EMS Memorial Foundation to continue our efforts.

Thank you again for the invitation to provide written testimony, and I am glad to answer any questions or provide you with additional information to inform your deliberations.

With sincere appreciation,

James Robinson, Director
National EMS Memorial Foundation
www.emsmemorial.org

From: [Susan Soladov](#)
To: [Jefferson Bruns](#)
Subject: S.1377 - The Theodore Roosevelt National Park Wild Horse Protection Act I urge you to support S.1377 with the requested amendments
Date: Tuesday, December 30, 2025 4:50:24 PM
Attachments: [ChasingHorsesWildHorseAdvocatesSupportS1377.pdf](#)

These beautiful horses need to be protected not killed. Once they were revered, now they are treated like nuisances. It is shameful!



I urge you to support S.1377 with the amendments submitted by Chasing Horses Wild Horse Advocates. These amendments ensure genetic viability, protect all 200 current horses, and establish a collaborative working group for responsible management. Thank you for supporting the wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

**Written testimony by U.S. Senator Eric Schmitt (R-MO)
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
Subcommittee on National Parks.**

December 9, 2025

Chairman Daines, Ranking Member King, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee:

Chairman Daines, Ranking Member King, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee, it is an honor and privilege to support S.2546, a bill continuing the authorization of the National Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Memorial in Washington, D.C.

I am proud to join Senator Chris Coons in leading this bipartisan and bicameral coalition of unlikely partners, all with one goal in mind: ensuring that the United States honors the courage, sacrifice, and daily commitment of EMS professionals across the country with a fitting recognition in their nation's capital, one that is long overdue.

In my home state of Missouri, we know better than most just how much we rely on the selfless service of EMS professionals. Across the state, Missouri holds nearly 20,000 EMS professionals, serving around 6 million Missourians. Whether in St. Louis or the bootheel, in rural counties or busy city streets, these American heroes spend each and every day helping those going through their worst of days.

People don't call 9-1-1 when they have good news to share. Instead, these brave men and women find themselves comforting new mothers clutching their newborns in fear, reassuring families trapped in a crushed vehicle, and counseling teenagers who have overdosed, all the way to laughing when it turns out to be nothing at all. What gets lost: they do all this for total strangers.

Their work isn't glamorous. It's gritty, and most of all, it's both mentally and physically demanding on them and their families.

These heroes don't ask for credit; they don't chase headlines—what they *do* is show up. Whether in the dead of night, in the middle of a twisting storm, on the most rural of roads, or everywhere in between.

That's why this bill is so important. Seven years ago, Congress unanimously authorized a national memorial to honor these heroes with a dedicated memorial, just as their fellow

first responders have. But, when the world changed in 2020, the foundation simply couldn't finish the job on time—that wasn't because of inaction.

As the world shut their door and went into isolation, EMS professionals around the country were busy responding to emergencies involving countless unknowns alongside never-before-seen circumstances, and they answered the call without hesitation.

Now, Congress needs to do the same for them.

This isn't complex policy we are talking about today. What we are asking for is a simple seven-year extension of authorities to allow the National Emergency Medical Services Memorial Foundation to continue their ongoing work to build a national memorial in our nation's capital as dictated by the Commemorative Works Act.

The Foundation has been hard at work, engulfing an extensive site evaluation process of 312 properties, and is currently awaiting approval for their ideal location at the Hubert H. Humphrey Building housing the Department of Health and Human Services. Not only does this potential site hold practical and historical significance for the EMS community, but it also preserves space on the National Mall—something I know my colleagues care deeply about.

As many of my Senate colleagues know, I am a strong advocate for reducing our ever-growing national debt through strong fiscal responsibility. This bill more than exceeds this belief, as this neither authorizes nor appropriates a cent of taxpayer dollars. The memorial will be fully funded by the Foundation, and any surplus funds will be returned to the federal government once the project is complete.

This bold action could not be timelier for the Show-Me State. Just this year, one of Missouri's bravest, Kansas City Firefighter/Paramedic Graham Hoffman, was murdered in the back of an ambulance while trying to save his murderer's life. He was not a victim; he was a hero, and we must work to ensure his life, alongside thousands of others, is honored to the utmost degree.

This isn't about politics—it's about honor. It's about giving our EMS professionals a permanent place in our national story so that future generations will never forget their sacrifice.

I want to thank the Subcommittee for their attention to this important piece of legislation, and I respectfully urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the nation's EMS professionals by swiftly passing this legislation.

From: jackiejoybuckner11@evervactioncustom.com on behalf of [Jackie Buckner](#)
To: [fortherecord \(Energy\)](#)
Subject: Support Critical Amendments to S1377 for Theodore Roosevelt Wild Horse Protection
Date: Tuesday, December 16, 2025 6:37:29 PM

Dear Chief Clerk,

I am writing to urge you to support critical amendments to S1377, The Theodore Roosevelt National Park Wild Horse Protection Act during the December 17, 2025 hearing before the Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee's Subcommittee on National Parks.

While I strongly support this legislation's intent to protect the historic wild horse herd at Theodore Roosevelt National Park, the bill requires clarification on several key points to ensure effective protection for these iconic animals.

I respectfully request the following amendments be made:

Change "genetically diverse" to "genetically viable" to protect horses best adapted to survive in the North Dakota badlands

Increase the minimum population from 150 to 200 horses to protect all current horses and allow natural population management

Require the creation of a wild horse working group, following the successful Shackleford Banks and Colorado Working Group model

Mandate the Secretary work with the working group when developing the management plan, ensuring proper time and public input under NEPA

Require management plan updates every 10 years or when new science provides better tools

Cease experimentation on these horses unless fully disclosed and discussed with the working group

These amendments will ensure the best possible protection for Theodore Roosevelt's wild horses while improving park-community relations and compensating for recent NPS budget cuts.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,
Ms. Jackie Buckner
3533 95th St Boulder, CO 80301-4942
jackiejoybuckner11@gmail.com



100 M Street SE
Suite 700
Washington, DC 20003

Chairman Mike Lee
United States Senate
Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Martin Heinrich
United States Senate
Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
Washington, D.C. 20510

December 9, 2025

Chairman Lee and Ranking Member Heinrich,

On behalf of the Trust for Public Land and our members and supporters throughout Utah and across the country, I am writing to express support for S.1135, the Bonneville Shoreline Trail Study Act. The Trust for Public Land's mission is to create parks, protect public land for people, and to provide access to the outdoors. Getting people outside, connecting with nature, and enjoying our shared public lands helps to ensure healthy, livable communities for generations to come.

Since 1991, the Trust for Public Land and our local partners have worked to protect land along the foothills of the Wasatch Front in Utah, to complete the Bonneville Shoreline Trail, and to ensure public recreational access to world class public lands. Together with our local partners we are working toward achieving the vision of a 280-mile long Bonneville Shoreline Trail stretching from the Idaho border in the north, to Nephi in the heart of Utah.

S. 1135 would direct the US Forest Service to study the feasibility of designating the Trail as a National Scenic Trail. The Trail is a major recreational destination for hiking, biking, snowshoeing, cross country skiing, and picnicking due to its proximity to Salt Lake City and the greater Wasatch Front.

The valley, carved by the prehistoric Lake Bonneville, is now home to one of the fastest growing urban corridors in the entire country. More than 75% of Utah's population lives along the Wasatch Front. In 2017, Utah's outdoor recreation economy generated more than \$12.3 billion in consumer spending and directly supported more than 100,000 jobs in Utah. S. 1135 will help to complete the vision of the Bonneville Shoreline Trail, giving outdoor enthusiasts new opportunities to get outside and enjoy the outdoors. We look forward to working with

you to advance the study bill through Congress and working together to achieve the promise of the Bonneville Shoreline Trail.

Sincerely,

Myke Bybee
Senior Director of Government Relations
Trust for Public Land

FOR RELEASE ONLY BY THE
SENATE COMMITTEE
ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
UNITED STATES SENATE
COMMITTEE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS

REGARDING:

S. 1135 – “A BILL TO AMEND THE NATIONAL TRAILS SYSTEM ACT TO DIRECT THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR TO CONDUCT A STUDY ON THE FEASIBILITY OF DESIGNATING THE BONNEVILLE SHORELINE TRAIL.”

DECEMBER 9, 2025

Chairman Daines, Ranking Member King, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the views of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) on one bill pertaining to the USDA Forest Service.

S. 1135, “A bill to amend the National Trails System Act to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study on the feasibility of designating the Bonneville Shoreline Trail.”

S. 1135 would amend the National Trails System Act to require the Department of the Interior (DOI) to conduct a feasibility study for the proposed 280-mile Bonneville Shoreline Trail spanning the Wasatch Mountain Range in Utah. DOI would determine the feasibility of designating a new national scenic trail based on whether it is physically possible to develop the trail along the study route and whether development is financially feasible. The National Trails System Act would require DOI to complete the feasibility study within three fiscal years following enactment of S. 1135.

USDA supports the goals of S. 1135 and would like to work with the sponsor to provide technical assistance. The Bonneville Shoreline Trail is a beloved mixed-use recreational trail with scenic, historic and geologic values. Named after the prehistoric Lake Bonneville, the trail follows the ancient shoreline along the Wasatch and Bear River mountain ranges from the Idaho-Utah border to Nephi, Utah. Local, statewide and national proponents have promoted development of the Bonneville Shoreline Trail along the Wasatch Front Range in northern and central Utah for decades. The Bonneville Shoreline Trail is among the most used recreation trails in Utah due to its proximity to urban centers such as Salt Lake City, Provo, and Ogden. USDA Forest Service currently manages approximately 41 miles of the trail through the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest. The Forest Service manages the trail in segments and the trail transects a complex network of county, state, federal and private lands. Due to the complicated matrix of land ownership, USDA recommends that geospatial data management and mapping should include all types of landowners to determine appropriate data sources for the feasibility study.

From: [Marie Wakefield](#)
To: [fortherecord \(Enerov\)](#); [Teegarden, Tori \(Barrasso\)](#); [Walker, Lahra \(Daines\)](#); [Harbin, Christine \(Cassidy\)](#); [Burks, Jen \(Hirono\)](#); [Plath, Savannah \(Gallego\)](#); [Gustafson, Eric \(Hoeven\)](#); [Chitre, Jui \(Kaine\)](#)
Subject: Support S.1377 with the requested amendments
Date: Tuesday, December 16, 2025 11:41:04 PM

Dear Sir/Madame,

I urge you to support S.1377 with the amendments submitted by Chasing Horses Wild Horse Advocates. These amendments ensure genetic viability, protect all 200 current horses, and establish a collaborative working group for responsible management.

Thank you for supporting the wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

Sincerely,

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Marie Wakefield
3054 Highway 20
Newport, OR 97365
wakefieldm_2000@yahoo.com

From: [gwampfler2](#)
To: [fortherecord \(Energy\)](#); [Teegarden, Tori \(Barrasso\)](#); [Walker, Lahra \(Daines\)](#); [Harbin, Christine \(Cassidy\)](#)
Cc: [gwampfler2](#)
Subject: Please Support S.1377 with Essential Amendments
Date: Tuesday, December 16, 2025 8:02:01 PM

Dear Madam or Sir,

I urge you to support S.1377 with the amendments submitted by Chasing Horses Wild Horse Advocates:

- **Change “genetically diverse” to “genetically viable.”**
This ensures a healthy, sustainable herd long-term.
- **Set herd size to “not fewer than 200” horses.**
This protects every horse currently living in the park.
- **Create a Wild Horse Working Group** with our allies at Chasing Horses Wild Horse Advocates to bring science, history, commerce, and advocacy together while filling major staffing gaps and strengthening community relations.

These amendments ensure genetic viability, protect all 200 current horses, and establish a collaborative working group for responsible management.
Thank you for supporting the wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

Sincerely,

Gabriele Wampfler
732 Lakeview Way
Redwood City, CA 94062
gwampfler2@earthlink.net

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

Local Community Residents Strongly Oppose S. 2970 - A bill to authorize the use of off-highway vehicles in certain areas of the Capitol Reef National Park, Utah.

We strongly oppose S. 2970, legislation introduced by Senators Lee and Curtis that would allow off-highway vehicles (OHVs) on Capitol Reef National Park roads that are now closed to them. We are mostly from Torrey, Teasdale, Grover, and Notom and we are very familiar with routes designated in the legislation. Those roads were closed to OHVs for good reasons. The Notom to Bullfrog road, for example, is deep in dust and loose sand for most months and OHV traffic is notorious for kicking dust into the air. Clouds of dust not only make visitors choke, they harm roadside vegetation and trees.

A highlight of a trip on the Cathedral Valley road is silence, an experience most Americans rarely get, and OHVs are loud. We can cite many other examples of why not to open roads mentioned in the legislation to OHV traffic. Even on State Highway 24, the noise of OHVs would alter the park experience for those using the trails that lead from 24. The revving from exposed motors on ATVs and UTVs carries much farther than engine noise from standard vehicles. Moab's main street provides a ready example of how OHV noise can make even conversation impossible adjacent to OHV traffic. Off-highway vehicles have thousands of miles of open roads and trails to explore outside of national parks. S. 2970 would welcome them where they don't belong. On Utah Highway 24 along the Fremont River, OHVs would slow traffic. On the park's backcountry routes, noise levels from ATVs and even more powerful utility-terrain-vehicles would ramp up for both visitors and wildlife. Off-highway vehicles would degrade the park experience for everyone.

NPS staff could have informed Senators Lee and Curtis if they were asked but they were not included in the creation of the legislation. Shutting out experts is not the way to write good law or policy and the flawed Lee/Curtis OHV legislation makes that case. Ignoring the stakeholders on the ground is also unwise and that is why we express our opposition.

We know firsthand the damage OHVs can do when they leave intended legal routes. We also know firsthand that although most OHV drivers are responsible and lawful, it is inevitable that some are not. In ample areas around Capitol Reef that are open to OHVs, we have seen how quickly routes get braided and how fragile desert ecosystems suffer. The Capitol Reef NPS staff is way too small to patrol the roads described in the legislation.

The park manages Capitol Reef backcountry for remoteness, "with its wilderness qualities preserved." At each step further into park backcountry, off-highway vehicles become more problematic. Park staff are already hard-pressed to respond to emergencies as park visitation increases. An influx of OHV traffic will exacerbate that problem.

We are familiar with local businesses because we use them often. Our local economy in the gateway communities thrives because of recreation, tourism, and retirement. People who love forests don't visit clearcuts and non-OHV visitors don't visit a noisy and eroded landscape obscured by dust. Senators Lee and Curtis could know that if they consulted with local businesses instead of commissioners who do not understand or honor the needs of gateway communities in their county.

The Lee/Curtis attempt to allow an OHV invasion into Capitol Reef would damage the ecological integrity of the park, destroy the experience of visitors, invite OHV abuse, and is contrary to purpose of a national park. We oppose it.

Respectfully,

Chip Ward (Torrey)	Priscilla Keswami (Teasdale)
Linda Ward (Torrey)	Sushiel Keswami (Teasdale)
Steve Trimble (Teasdale)	Ty Markham (Torrey)
Joanne Slotnik (Teasdale)	Sean Miles (Teasdale)
Scott Berry (Teasdale)	Sandy Bothwick (Torrey)
Fred Swanson (Grover)	Jim Robinson (Torrey)
Brian Swanson (Teasdale)	Laura Fertig (Teasdale)
Pat Priebe (Teasdale)	Bernie Westerfield (Torrey)
Susan Wright (Torrey)	Joy Morris (Torrey)
Lorraine Miller (Teasdale)	Carl Juliano (Torrey)
Marilyn Copeland (Torrey)	Dominick Juliano (Torrey)
Paisley Rekdal (Teasdale)	Janeen Costa (Teasdale)
Nan Anderson (Torrey)	John Lee (Torrey)

Steve Babbitt (Torrey)	Linda Peer (Torrey)
Nancy Babbitt (Torrey)	Tom Berggren (Teasdale)
Shauna Sudbury (Torrey)	Lydia Berggren (Teasdale)
Nancy Roth (Torrey)	Allison Dansie (Torrey)
Janet Nystrom (Torrey)	Kent Patterson (Torrey)
Mary Bedingfield-Smith (Torrey)	Linda Dewey (Torrey)
Nancy Bradish (Torrey)	Alan Dewey (Torrey)
Tyler Ward (Torrey)	Jen Howe (Torrey)
Lynsey Shelar (Torrey)	Sandy Lovato (Torrey)
Bill Barrett (Torrey)	Ted Lovato (Torrey)
Dianne Barrett (Torrey)	Reda Herriot (Torre)
Sara Tal (Torrey)	Benjamin Smith (Teasdale)
Bob Emrich (Grover)	Linsey Smith (Teasdale)
Joanne Emrich (Grover)	Jack Kelly (Teasdale)
Daniel Emrich (Torrey)	Sue Shellenbarger (Teasdale)
Bill Mahon (Torrey)	Jim Campe (Torrey)
Sharon Hunter (Torrey)	Pam Campe (Torrey)
Heidi Mitchell (Teasdale)	Barry Morgenstern (Torrey)
Dave Cushing (Torrey)	Bonnie Mangold (Teasdale)

I am writing to express my opposition to S2970 proposed by Mike Lee and John Curtis.

I live full time in Teasdale near Capitol Reef National Park. I hike extensively year round in the Park.

The Park is a huge draw for visitors from around the world and the United States for a beautiful, quiet, natural experience. Their visitation enhances the economy of our region. For 20 years I owned an art gallery in Torrey, the gateway to the Park, and the

majority of our clients were there specifically for CRNP and my business benefitted from that.

The park is also a safe non-chaotic sanctuary for wildlife.

OHVs create noise, dust, air pollution, trash, and soil disturbance, not to mention the damage by a percentage of users that drive off established roads.

Just outside the park are thousands of miles of routes open to OHVs. An established OHV destination not far from CRNP (Swing Arm City) is popular with OHV users. Boulder and Thousand Lake Mountains feature numerous routes. The Great Western Trail system links established routes covering much of southern Utah.

The management of CRNP was not consulted in formulating this bill. They strongly oppose these changes to park operations. With Trump's recent staff cuts in the already understaffed park management, patrolling back-country routes would be impossible.

The Lee/Curtis bill would negate the reasons the park was created: To provide a quiet, clean, natural landscape free of the chaos and pollution inherent in motorized recreation.

For these reasons I strongly oppose S2970.

Patricia Priebe

I moved to beautiful Utah in 2013 and have not been disappointed by either that beauty, or by the kindness of the people here who are now my friends and neighbors.

Utah politicians, on the other hand, have done nothing but disappoint me. They have done so essentially every one of the 4,460 I have lived here in Wayne County, in the vibrant town of Torrey (well, all except our exceptional current Mayor).

And this most recent disappointment has to do with S.2970 introduced by both our Republican Senators, Lee and Curtis.

Do these two men know anything about Capitol Reef National Park? About Wayne County? Have they ever experienced a clear summer day with endless blue skies as one looks down from the Goosenecks onto the winding Fremont River? Have they ever seen the transient waterfalls that cascade all over Capitol Reef after one of our monsoon rains? Have they seen the signs of mountain lions in the park's back country

or watched the sun rise at the Temple of the Sun or a moon rise at the Temple of the Moon?

It is clear from this horrendous bill that they have not, because no human being with a heart, a brain, or eyes could know these natural beauties — know the creatures who live in our park and the flora that somehow holds on in the park's adverse conditions — and want to befoul all this God-given beauty with the sounds and the smells of ATVs.

There are plenty of nearby places that welcome —nay, encourage — ATVs. But the National Parks were created to be a haven for the American people, American flora and fauna, away from exactly such mechanization. They are meant to be places for contemplation of what has been bestowed upon us by our Creator.

As others have said, "The park manages Capitol Reef backcountry for remoteness, "with its wilderness qualities preserved." At each step further into park backcountry, off-highway vehicles become more problematic. Park staff are already hard-pressed to respond to emergencies as park visitation increases. An influx of OHV traffic will exacerbate that problem."

What is to be gained by the community here in Wayne County that so avidly protects this amazing natural gift if it is ruined by unnecessary mechanized invaders? What is to be gained by the visitors from across our country and around the world? And what price can Lee and Curtis put on what is gained? A few dollars perhaps. If so then they are those people who know the price of everything and the value of nothing.

The Lee/Curtis attempt to allow an OHV invasion into Capitol Reef would damage the ecological integrity of the park, destroy the experience of visitors, invite OHV abuse, and — most significantly —is contrary to the purpose of a national park. I most heartily oppose it.

Barry Morgenstern; Torrey, Wayne County, Utah

I am writing to strongly oppose S. 2970, the bill from Senators Mike Lee and John Curtis that would force Capitol Reef National Park to open roads to off-highway vehicles (OHVs) that are currently—and appropriately—closed.

As someone who lives in Torrey, I have a special interest in opposing this proposal. We don't need vehicles kicking up choking clouds of dust that damage vegetation, coat trees, and ruin the visitor experience.

Cathedral Valley's defining feature is silence—one of the rarest experiences left in America. OHV engines would shatter that, with noise carrying miles across the landscape. Even along Highway 24, OHV traffic would inject noise into trailheads and overlooks, slow scenic-corridor traffic, and degrade the entire park experience.

OHVs already have thousands of miles of legal routes on BLM, state, and Forest Service lands. There is no justification for pushing them into a national park.

This legislation was drafted without National Park Service input. NPS staff—who understand the resource, the geology, safety issues, and the fragility of desert soils—were not consulted. Local gateway communities weren't consulted either, even though our economy depends on a protected landscape, not dust clouds, engine noise, and eroded OHV ruts.

I've seen firsthand what happens where OHVs are allowed: braided routes, crushed biological soil crusts, damaged vegetation, and inevitable off-route abuse. Capitol Reef's small staff cannot police the surge in traffic this bill would create. And with visitation already rising, adding OHVs would only strain emergency response further.

This bill undermines the park's purpose. Capitol Reef's backcountry is managed for remoteness and preserved wilderness character. Flooding it with OHVs is fundamentally incompatible with that mandate.

My community's economy depends on the quiet, scenic, protected landscape people come here to experience. Tourism, recreation, and retirees—not OHV noise—keep these towns alive. People don't travel to national parks to hike through dust clouds and engine revving.

The Curtis/Lee bill would damage Capitol Reef's ecological integrity; diminish the visitor experience; invite off-route abuse and erosion; overwhelm park staff and emergency responders; and harm the local economy that depends on a protected landscape.

I oppose S. 2970 unequivocally.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jen Howe

I strongly oppose SB. 2970, the Lee/Curtis bill to allow OHVs on Capitol Reef roads. Living in Torrey, I know these routes well. OHVs kick up choking dust, damage vegetation, and their noise destroys the rare silence that makes Capitol Reef so special.

I often hike the trails off Highway 24 and in the backcountry—quiet places where I can escape everyday noise. It's a much different experience than hiking in the National Forest north of Torrey, where ATVs are allowed and their engines can be heard from miles away. Bringing that noise into Capitol Reef would ruin what makes the park unique.

Capitol Reef's backcountry is managed for remoteness, yet OHVs would bring noise, dust, and damage to fragile desert ecosystems. Park staff are already stretched thin and cannot patrol the added traffic. Our local economy depends on visitors seeking peace and beauty, not the roar and erosion OHVs bring. I am concerned how wildlife in the park would be affected.

This legislation ignores local voices and experts. Allowing OHVs into Capitol Reef would degrade the park's integrity, harm wildlife, and ruin the experience for everyone. I know firsthand the damage OHVs cause, and I strongly oppose this bill.

With concern for Capitol Reef,

Susan O'Connor-Wright, Torrey

This is Nancy Bradish, LCSW, homeowner and resident on Sand Creek Rd. Torrey, Utah at the base of Capitol Reef. I am adamantly against Senate Bill 2970 introduced by Senator Curtis and Lee to introduce and allow OHV's into Capital Reef National Park.

As a MENTAL HEALTH specialist, I am well aware of the need for more tranquility and peace in our life to foster and maintain our mental and spiritual well-being. OHVs create noise pollution, stir up dust and interfere with wildlife habitat and the ecosystem.

In addition, we already have plenty of roads for OHVs.

I live on Sand Creek road, gateway to one of the trails for the Great Western trail and hear ATVs, including the obnoxious whining of dirt bikes going up and down the road constantly, especially during summer months.

In addition, we do not need to open Highway 24 through the park to OHVs either. It's a narrow road as is and would significantly slow traffic and create more congestion. If folks want to travel to Hanksville they can transport their OHVs on trailers.

Nancy Bradish; Torrey, Utah

I am writing to express my opposition to S2970 proposed by out of touch Mike Lee and John Curtis.

Retired and living in Teasdale Near Capitol Reef National Park, I am a steady visitor to public lands in southern Utah, including CRNP.

Park visitors come from around the world for a beautiful, quiet, natural experience, enhancing the economy of our region. The park is also a safe non-chaotic sanctuary for wildlife.

OHVs create noise, dust, air pollution, trash, and soil disturbance (by that percentage of users that drive off of established roads).

Just outside the park are thousands of miles of routes open to OHVs.

To the north BLM lands include „Swing Arm City“ and the San Rafael Swell. To the south are National Forest lands including Boulder and Thousand Lake Mountains, featuring numerous routes. The „Great Western Trail“ system links routes covering much of southern Utah.

The management of CRNP was not consulted in formulating this bill.

They strongly oppose these changes to park operations. With Trump's recent staff cuts in the already understaffed park management, patrolling back-country routes would be impossible.

The Lee/Curtis bill would negate the reasons the park was created: to provide a quiet, clean, natural landscape free of the chaos and pollution inherent in motorized recreation.

For these reasons I strongly oppose S2970.

Sincerely: **Brian Swanson**, Teasdale, Utah

I am writing in regard to Mike Lee's proposed bill allowing OHV use in National Parks. This is a terrible idea. People visit National Parks not only for the spectacular scenery but for peace and quiet too. OHVs are incredibly loud and polluting. A lot of the roads in Capitol Reef are in narrow canyons and the roar of OHVs reverberating would ruin the experience for most people. Nobody rides their OHVs to Capitol Reef, they come in trucks with their OHVs on trailers. Why can't they enjoy the Park in their trucks like the rest of us? The State of Utah claims there are 80,000 miles of roads and trails open for OHV use. Isn't that enough? Keep OHVs out of our National Parks!

Thank you, **Doug Campbell**

Testimony from Gary Werner
S. 2708, the Appalachian Trail Centennial Act

Chairman Daines, Ranking Member King, and Members of the National Parks Subcommittee:

From 1991 through 2020 I had the privilege and pleasure of working professionally with nearly all the nonprofit organizations and the Federal agencies staff that sustain the national scenic and historic trails for the public to experience, learn about, and enjoy. I have also done trail making and land stewardship volunteer work on the Ice Age National Scenic Trail for 42 years.

S. 2708 is an appropriate and necessary complement and extension of the National Trails System Act, 16USC Chapter 27 (NTSA). **S. 2708** recognizes and validates the reality of how national scenic and historic trails function as complex relationships between various public agencies and nonprofit organizations. These essential public/private partnerships are authorized by the NTSA but critical details that make them actually work are not explicitly recognized.

One highly successful manifestation of these complex partnerships is the “Cooperative Management System” developed for the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. Some variation of this system – with particular details suited to the individual trails various circumstances – is practiced on all of the national scenic and historic trails. It is both appropriate and necessary that **S. 2708** recognizes the “Cooperative Management System” in its many forms as essential for the success of the National Trails System. (Sec.3 (3) & (4))

S. 2708 helps to clarify the nature of these various relationships by distinguishing between three major functions necessary for the national scenic and historic trails to exist and successfully function. The bill clearly recognizes the administrative functions required of the three Federal agencies Congress has authorized to administer the trails, the management responsibilities of the agencies managing land through which the trails pass, and the on-the-ground operations that actually make these trails available for the public to use and enjoy. By clarifying and validating these roles **S. 2708** statutorily empowers the various partners -- especially the nongovernmental organizations -- to do the necessary and effective work that is making and sustaining the national scenic and historic trails.

Designated Operating Partner (Sec.4(b)(1))

Among these three categories of functions **S. 2708** recognizes the absolutely essential role played by nonprofit organization partners and the tens of thousands of volunteers they organize, train, and guide in the day-to-day on-the-ground operations of the national scenic and historic trails. This role is envisioned and authorized by the NTSA but details of the relationship of these organizations to the Federal agencies administering the trails are left unspecified. The reality is that the national scenic and historic trails would not exist on-the-ground for people to use, learn from, and enjoy without the work of the nonprofit nongovernmental partners. **S. 2708** remedies this gap in the NTSA by authorizing “Designated Operating Partners” for each of the national scenic and historic trails.

Trail Land Protection (Sec.4(b)(3))

Trail land protection is the most critical unmet need of the national scenic and historic trails. All of these trails, except the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, have significant gaps in their continuity or unprotected “significant sites and segments.” For instance, nearly 50 years after they were authorized by Congress the Ice Age and North Country National Scenic Trails are only slightly more than half complete.

Closing the gaps in these and the other national scenic trails and protecting the “significant sites and segments” of the national historic trails will require persistent concerted multi-year trail land protection like that undertaken for the Appalachian Trail from the 1970s through the early 2000s. The scale of these endeavors warrants the assistance of all the public and private entities involved with each of these trails. **S. 2708** recognizes the lead responsibility of the Federal administering agencies to undertake this task while also empowering the nongovernmental “Designated Operating Partner” to collaborate in this endeavor. There is plenty of trail land protection needed for every member of each trail’s “Cooperative Management System” to help address this critical need.

Of the several regular actions to be undertaken by the partners for each national trail stipulated in this legislation priority should be given to Trail Land Protection.

I thank Senators Kaine and Tillis for introducing this legislation to recognize the century of public service work undertaken by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy to build and sustain the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. Through this legislation they have validated the intricate system of public/private partnerships, known as the “Cooperative Management System,” that makes the long-distance trail possible and empowered the nongovernmental partners involved. They have generously done this not for the Appalachian National Scenic Trail alone but have provided a framework for extending this statutory validation and empowerment to all the national scenic and historic trails.

I urge Senators Kaine and Tillis and the members of the National Parks Subcommittee to work with the national trails community to refine this important legislation so that it will work readily and effectively for all the national scenic and historic trails.

Respectfully,

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

Gary Werner, Volunteer Trail Land Steward

2302 Lakeland Ave. Madison, WI 53704

November 28, 2025

To: Senator John Hoeven - **From:** Wild In North Dakota, Inc.

Subject: S.1377 – Theodore Roosevelt National Park Wild Horses Protection Act

Dear Senator Hoeven,

On behalf of our nonprofit, Wild In North Dakota, we are proud to stand with you in support of the proposed Protection Act for the wild horses of Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

The primary mission of our organization has been to raise awareness of this magnificent herd. To that end, we have built a following of more than 400,000 followers-not only across the United States, but around the world.

In addition to our broad base of support, we have adopted five horses through Park auctions over the years, taming and training them ourselves. This experience has given us an intimate understanding of their intelligence, temperament and adaptability. These horses are truly extraordinary and deserving of a protection plan that ensures they can continue to call Theodore Roosevelt National Park their home.

We take great pride in supporting this Protection Act as this herd has roamed the landscape of this remarkable National Park for decades. Theodore Roosevelt National Park would not be the same without them.

Thank you for your continued leadership in working with Park management and for authoring this bill to safeguard the herd for generations to come.

Yours sincerely,

Eileen M. Norton
President
Wild In North Dakota
501(c)(3) North Dakota Non-Profit Organization
EIN: 46-3215175