



November 12, 2013

The Honorary Patty Murray, Chair  
United States Senate  
Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs  
825A Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Murray:

On this Veterans Day, the National Parks Conservation Association and our more than 750,000 members and supporters nationwide are pleased to voice our strong endorsement of the Veterans Jobs Corps Act of 2012.

In four short years, the nation will mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the creation of the modern National Park System. During that time, the Park System has grown to include not only the most splendid examples of America's magnificent natural and scenic heritage, but also the very places and things that cradle the story of our nation's creation, our struggles and triumphs as a people, our shared values, and our way of life. Still, as the national park centennial approaches, the parks are in dramatic need of attention if their resources are to be preserved for future generations to learn from and enjoy. Today, the cost of badly needed deferred maintenance for deteriorating park resources exceeds \$11 billion. A significant part of that staggering figure is the cost of labor to carry out the repairs that are necessary.

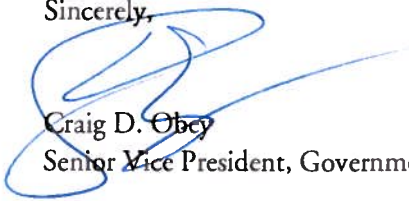
There is no doubt that as a nation we owe an inestimable debt of gratitude to the returning men and women of America's Armed forces, who have given so much to protect us and the things we all hold dear. It is our clear national duty to do everything we can to assist these veterans as they return to civilian life.

With the unemployment rate among returning veterans still at 9.1 percent, what could be more fitting than to provide unemployed veterans with meaningful work doing the things immediately necessary to restore and preserve the tangible symbols of America's national identity and values? The parks need help and veterans need immediate jobs. What could be more sensible, reasonable, cost effective and patriotic than putting the two things together in a concerted and organized way, as this bill makes possible? Even though the amount of money that would be available for park projects under the bill is relatively small in comparison to the size of the maintenance backlog as a whole, by chipping away at the backlog while providing

returning veterans with meaningful and beneficial work when they need it, the Veterans Jobs Corps Act deserves the strongest possible support.

We pledge to do everything we can to help see it enacted into law, and we look forward to working with you when the 113<sup>th</sup> Congress convenes on what should truly be a national priority.

Sincerely,



Craig D. Obey  
Senior Vice President, Government Affairs

cc: Hon. Richard Burr, Ranking Minority member