



Honorable Jack Reed  
Chairman, Subcommittee on  
the Interior, Environment, and  
Related Agencies  
United States Senate  
The Capitol, Room S128  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Honorable Lisa Murkowski  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on  
the Interior, Environment, and  
Related Agencies  
United States Senate  
The Capitol, Room S146A  
Washington, D.C. 20510

September 5, 2014

Dear Chairman Reed and Ranking Member Murkowski:

We are grateful for your efforts to increase the nation's commitment to our national parks in the proposed Senate FY15 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies appropriations bill. Both the national parks and the millions of Americans who cherish and depend upon these special places will benefit. We also applaud your efforts to not include harmful policy riders found in the House bill that threaten the air and water quality standards necessary for the health of park visitors, resources, and wildlife. We offer our support for the funding levels proposed for the National Park Service and urge you to seek House acceptance of your levels in the final funding vehicle. And we praise your efforts to work in a bipartisan way on behalf of our national parks and park programs that have the support of all Americans, across geographic, ethnic and economic lines.

The proposed \$73 million funding increase to the National Park Service for FY15, and particularly for the increase in park operations to enhance visitor services, expand volunteer and youth opportunities, and continue to address the maintenance backlog, is important when viewed in the context of overall budgetary constraints. If enacted, this investment would undo some of the impacts of the recent cuts by restoring some ranger programs to educate visitors and support long overdue day-to-day maintenance. We applaud your inclusion of policy language to fund emergency wildfire costs from a disaster funding account, which would allow the subcommittee to more adequately fund national parks and other programs and agencies in future years and curtail the growing pressure of fire costs on other key agency missions.

In addition, we were pleased to see the inclusion of \$10 million request to revive the Centennial Challenge and a proposal to extend the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA), as proposed by both the Administration and the House. The investment in the Centennial Challenge is a great start to what we hope will be a much larger investment in coming years. The National

Parks Second Century Action Coalition and partners will continue to advocate for a long term reauthorization of FLREA.

We are very concerned that this is the final year of the budget agreement reached after sequestration and the October government shutdown. Recent cuts have severely reduced the number of park rangers, compromised science and resource protection, decreased necessary maintenance, caused parks and park facilities to reduce hours, increased the backlog of deferred maintenance and more. We urge this subcommittee to work with the Administration immediately to prevent another round of devastating cuts to the national parks, and to instead reach agreement on a strategy to equip our national parks to thrive and continue benefitting our nation for the next 100 years.

Sincerely,

American Hiking Society  
Association of Partners for Public Lands  
Buffalo National River Partners  
Coalition of National Park Service Retirees  
The Corps Network  
Destination Marketing Association  
International  
Discover Your Northwest  
Eugene O'Neill Foundation, Tao House  
Friends of Acadia  
Friends of Big Bend National Park  
Friends of The Cape Cod National Seashore  
The Friends of Dyke Marsh  
Friends of Haleakala National Park  
Friends of Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park  
Friends of Minute Man National Park  
Friends of Moccasin Bend  
Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes  
Friends of the Smokies  
Friends of Virgin Islands National Park  
Grand Canyon Association  
Isle Royale & Keweenaw Parks Association  
National Parks Conservation Association  
National Park Hospitality Association

National Tour Association  
National Trust for Historic Preservation  
Japanese American Citizens League  
Mount Rushmore Society  
Natchez Convention and Visitor Bureau  
Pea Ridge National Military Park  
Foundation  
Petrified Forest Museum Association  
Preserve Historic Sleeping Bear  
Public Lands Service Coalition  
Rocky Mountain Conservancy  
The Sandy Hook Foundation  
Shenandoah National Park Trust  
Sierra Club  
Southeast Tourism Society  
St. Croix River Association  
Timucuan Trail Parks Foundation  
Trust for the National Mall  
Voyageurs National Park Association  
Western National Parks Association  
Wolf Trap Foundation  
YMCA of the USA  
Yosemite Conservancy

*Cc: Majority Leader Harry Reid and Minority Leader Mitch McConnell*