



The Honorable Lisa Murkowski  
Chairwoman, Subcommittee on the Interior,  
Environment and Related Agencies  
United States Senate  
125 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Udall  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on the Interior,  
Environment and Related Agencies  
United States Senate  
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

March 17, 2015

Dear Chairwoman Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall:

Next year, Americans will celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the creation of the modern National Park System. We, the members of the National Parks Second Century Action Coalition, write in support of increasing the nation's commitment to our national parks for their centennial year in the FY16 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies appropriations bill. Specifically, we support:

- A \$239 million increase in the operating budget for the National Park Service over FY15 levels to restore funds lost over the last several years;
- A \$113 million increase in the construction budget for the National Park Service over FY15 levels to help address the deferred maintenance backlog;
- A \$40 million increase for the Centennial Challenge program to continue to leverage federal funding with private donations to help restore and modernize our parks;
- The temporary extension of the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act until a longer term reauthorization can occur; and
- The continued support for legislation to address the financial impacts of wildfire suppression on the Department of the Interior budget.

The National Parks Second Century Action Coalition is made up of organizations supporting conservation, recreation, outdoor industry, travel and tourism and historic preservation that are dedicated to promoting the protection, restoration, and operation of the National Park System to benefit the health and well-being of current and future generations.

We are grateful for the real, though modest, reinvestment in park operations funding in FY15 and we support an additional investment of \$239 million in FY16 so parks can address fixed costs, ensure day-to-day maintenance, advance urban youth education initiatives, preserve the Civil Rights Movement, and restore lost park ranger positions that maintain, restore and interpret parks. In addition, an increased investment of \$113 million in the construction account will help address the \$11.5 billion deferred maintenance backlog. These requested amounts return the operations and construction budgets to FY10 levels prior to the harmful sequester.

An increased investment of the Centennial Challenge program by \$40 million will encourage friends groups, foundations, businesses and other non-federal institutions to help restore our parks. An initial federal investment of \$40 million several years ago generated \$50 million in donations.

We ask for continued support to extend the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act until a longer term reauthorization can occur. This will allow the National Park Service and other federal land management agencies to retain and use nearly \$300 million in critically needed fee revenue annually.

Additionally, we urge your support for the reintroduced Wildfire Disaster Funding Act. Passage would provide some necessary funding relief to the National Park Service and other Interior agency budgets while relieving the Department of the Interior and the US Forest Service of the many challenges and inefficiencies with “fire borrowing.”

As a final note, we recognize that a more substantial investment is needed in our national parks as the System turns 100, and thus are urging Congress to support the president’s request to provide mandatory funding to support the Centennial Challenge and address the deferred maintenance backlog.

We recognize and thank you for your ongoing efforts to balance limited resources in a difficult fiscal climate. With the National Park System Centennial approaching, we ask you to restore funding to our national parks to ensure enjoyment for future generations. Our cultural and natural heritage, recreational resources, American families who love to visit our national parks, and the economies of park-reliant communities will all benefit from your commitment to our national parks and their gateway communities.

Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

Association for Partners for Public Lands  
 American Forests  
 American Hiking Society  
 American Recreation Coalition  
 Appalachian Trail Conservancy  
 Coalition of National Park Service Retirees  
 Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National  
 Park  
 The Corps Network  
 Destination Marketing Association International  
 Friends of Acadia  
 Friends of Big Bend National Park  
 Friends of Dyke Marsh  
 Friends of the Oregon Caves and Chateau  
 Friends of Saguaro National Park  
 Friends of Valle de Oro National Wildlife  
 Refuge  
 GirlTrek  
 Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy  
 Grand Canyon Association  
 Hispanic Access Fund

Mount Rushmore Society  
 National Council on Public History  
 National Military Family Association  
 National Parks Conservation Association  
 National Park Hospitality Association  
 National Trust for Historic Preservation  
 National Tour Association  
 NatureBridge  
 Nature Fund for National Parks  
 Outdoor Industry Association  
 Public Lands Service Coalition  
 Receptive Services Association of America  
 The Shenandoah National Park Trust  
 Student & Youth Travel Association  
 Travel Professionals of Color  
 U.S. Travel Association  
 U.S. Tour Operators Association  
 Western National Parks Association  
 Western States Tourism Policy Council  
 Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts

