

**American Recreation Coalition ♦ Appalachian Trail Conservancy
Association of Partners for Public Lands ♦ Blue Ridge Parkway Association
Coalition of National Park Service Retirees ♦ Destination Marketing Association International
Dumbarton Oaks Park Conservancy ♦ Friends of Acadia ♦ Friends of Blue Ridge Parkway
Friends of the Cape Cod National Seashore ♦ Friends of Great Smoky Mountain National Park
Friends of Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park ♦ Friends of Historic Great Falls Tavern
Friends of Saguaro National Park ♦ Friends of Valley Forge Park
Japanese American Citizens League ♦ Mesa Verde Foundation ♦ Mount Rushmore Society
National Parks Conservation Association ♦ National Park Hospitality Association
National Tour Association ♦ National Trust for Historic Preservation
Outdoor Industry Association ♦ Southeast Tourism Society ♦ Student Conservation Association
Western National Parks Association ♦ Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts
Yosemite Conservancy**

The Honorable Barbara Boxer
U.S. Senate
Chair, Environment and Public
Works Committee
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable David Vitter
U.S. Senate
Ranking Member, Environment and Public
Works Committee
456 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

May 15, 2014

Dear Chairwoman Boxer and Ranking Member Vitter:

As you consider the reauthorization of MAP-21, we strongly urge you to substantially increase the funding that national parks receive under the Federal Lands Transportation Program. Funding for the parks has remained unchanged from levels established by SAFETEA-LU in 2005, despite the steady increase of the transportation maintenance backlog in the national parks to more than \$6 billion. Transportation needs comprise more than half of the National Park Service's \$11.3 billion maintenance backlog.

With nearly 300 million people visiting national parks every year and contributing as estimated \$14 billion in nearby gateway communities, improvements in transportation infrastructure in national parks must be prioritized. Of the 25 most popular travel destinations in the US, eight are units of the National Park System and one out of every five international tourists visits the national parks.

However, nearly 40% of national park roads are in poor to fair condition according to the FHWA's Pavement Condition Rating System. In addition, 42 park bridges are structurally deficient. The National Park Service estimates that it needs \$970 million per year to complete, restore and maintain the parks' core transportation infrastructure. This figure includes both core program needs as well as

more than a dozen mega projects in the parks whose costs are so large that they far exceed the financial capacity of the Federal Lands Transportation Program, like the critically needed renovation of the Memorial Bridge that connects the Lincoln Memorial to Arlington National Cemetery.

The centennial of the National Park System in 2016 is the right time to invest in restoring and renewing the surface transportation infrastructure in America's beloved national icons. We ask that the Senate **increase funding for FLTP, including a boost to the set-aside for national parks under FLTP by \$125 million per year** during the life of the reauthorization, in order to address the core programmatic needs identified by the NPS. **In addition, we urge support for efforts to address the mega project needs in our national parks through a separate set-aside for nationally significant projects on public lands, which could be accomplished through negotiations on the Udall amendment.**

We are pleased that the MAP-21 reauthorization proposal released on May 12 rejects the administration's proposal in GROW AMERICA to eliminate the guaranteed funding amount for NPS. Guaranteed funding allows the NPS to efficiently plan and use its scarce transportation dollars.

We now ask that you exercise the leadership our national parks so desperately need by increasing the priority the bill places on this core federal responsibility. Transportation systems on federal lands are wholly the responsibility of the federal government and *thus are dependent upon Congress to fund them adequately.*

Thank you for considering our concerns regarding the future of NPS transportation systems.

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