

STATEMENT OF JOY BEASLEY, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, CULTURAL RESOURCES, PARTNERSHIPS, AND SCIENCE , NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE HOUSE NATURAL RESOURCES SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS, AND PUBLIC LANDS, CONCERNING H.R. 1664, A BILL TO AUTHORIZE THE NATIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR MUSEUM FOUNDATION TO ESTABLISH A COMMEMORATIVE WORK IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA OR ITS ENVIRONS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

MAY 27, 2021

Chairman Neguse, Ranking Member Fulcher, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the Department of the Interior's views on H.R. 1664, a bill to authorize the National Medal of Honor Museum Foundation to establish a commemorative work in the District of Columbia or its environs, and for other purposes.

The Department supports H.R. 1664. The commemorative work would be an appropriate way to honor the valor and values displayed by Medal of Honor recipients, many of whom died in the line of duty.

H.R. 1664 authorizes the National Medal of Honor Museum Foundation to establish a commemorative work in the nation's capital to honor the extraordinary acts of valor, selfless service, and sacrifice displayed by Medal of Honor recipients. The work would be permitted in Area I or Area II under the Commemorative Works Act (40 U.S.C. 89) (Act) but not in the area designated as the "Reserve", which consists of the National Mall and areas to the north and south of the White House. The bill requires compliance with the Act and prohibits Federal funds from being used to establish the monument.

The Medal of Honor is the United States' highest military decoration. It is awarded to U.S. service members who distinguished themselves with extraordinary acts of heroism, and whose service and sacrifice far exceeded the call of duty.

During the 116th Congress, a similar bill H.R. 5173, was introduced by Representative Veasey. The National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission (Commission) reviewed that legislation and made recommendations to Congress on the bill language that would bring the bill in alignment with the requirements of the Act. The recommendations were made in accordance with the Act, which states that Congress shall solicit the views of the Commission in considering legislation authorizing commemorative works within the District of Columbia and its environs. H.R. 1664 as introduced reflects the Commission's recommendations. The Department concurs with the Commission's views and supports the legislation as introduced.

Chairman Neguse, this concludes my statement. I would be pleased to answer any questions you or other members of the Subcommittee may have.

STATEMENT OF JOY BEASLEY, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, CULTURAL RESOURCES, PARTNERSHIPS, AND SCIENCE, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, FOR THE HOUSE NATURAL RESOURCES SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS, AND PUBLIC LANDS, CONCERNING H.R. 1931, A BILL TO PROVIDE COMPETITIVE GRANTS FOR THE PROMOTION OF JAPANESE AMERICAN CONFINEMENT EDUCATION AS A MEANS TO UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE OF DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES, USE AND ABUSE OF POWER, AND TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL TOLERANCE TOWARD JAPANESE AMERICANS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

MAY 27, 2021

Chairman Neguse, Ranking Member Fulcher, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to provide the Department of the Interior's views on H.R. 1931, a bill to provide competitive grants for the promotion of Japanese American confinement education as a means to understand the importance of democratic principles, use and abuse of power, and to raise awareness about the importance of cultural tolerance toward Japanese Americans, and for other purposes.

The Department supports the goals of H.R. 1931 to better educate the public about the treatment of Japanese Americans during World War II and to preserve historic resources associated with that difficult chapter of our nation's history. The Department supports renewing the authorization of appropriations for the Japanese American Confinement Sites (JACS) grant program, as H.R. 1931 would do. This would continue the authorization of funding for a program whose mission is to teach future generations about the injustices of the World War II confinement of Japanese Americans and to inspire a commitment to equal justice under the law.

Section 4 of H.R. 1931 would authorize \$38 million for the JACS grant program beginning in FY 2021, and for each fiscal year thereafter, allowing funding for the program to continue after the current authorization limit is reached. The JACS grant program, authorized in 2006 by Public Law 109-441, provides matching grants to entities dedicated to preserving and interpreting the history of Japanese Americans who were incarcerated by the U.S. government during World War II. The National Park Service awards grants to successful project proposals based on a competitive process, and applicants must match the grant award with \$1 in non-federal funds or in-kind contributions for every \$2 they receive in Federal funds. The law authorized appropriations of a total of \$38 million. Since 2009, the program has awarded more than \$36 million in grants to various entities for preservation, restoration and education projects that help tell the story of the more than 120,000 Japanese Americans incarcerated by the U.S. government during World War II. Recipients of grants include a variety of organizations and institutions, including Japanese American museums as well as nonprofit organizations working in partnership with Japanese American museums. The JACS grant program typically receives requests for funding totaling more than \$5 million each year; annual appropriations typically fund just over \$3 million worth of grants.

Section 3 of H.R. 1931 would establish a new program separate from the JACS grant program to award a \$2 million competitive grant to a Japanese American museum for each of the next five fiscal years (FY 2022 to FY 2026). The grants issued under this program would not require matching funds. Several specific requirements for a museum's eligibility for the grant program are included in the bill. Grants would be used for research and education relating to Japanese American confinement during World War II, and for the disbursement of accurate, relevant, and accessible resources to promote understanding about how and why the Japanese American incarceration happened.

It is likely that purposes of the program in Section 3 could be served by the existing JACS grant program, with funding to be matched by the recipient. If the Committee moves forward on this bill, we would appreciate having the opportunity to work with the bill sponsor and the Committee on language that would address coordinating the new grant program established under section 3 with the existing JACS grant program and clarifying the authorization amount.

Chairman Neguse, this concludes my statement. I would be pleased to answer any questions you or other members of the Subcommittee may have.

STATEMENT OF JOY BEASLEY, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, CULTURAL RESOURCES, PARTNERSHIPS, AND SCIENCE, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE HOUSE NATURAL RESOURCES SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS, AND PUBLIC LANDS, CONCERNING H.R. 2278, A BILL TO AUTHORIZE THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR TO DESIGNATE THE SEPTEMBER 11TH NATIONAL MEMORIAL TRAIL, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

MAY 27, 2021

Chairman Neguse, Ranking Member Fulcher, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to provide the Department of the Interior's views on H.R. 2278, a bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to designate the September 11th National Memorial Trail, and for other purposes.

The Department supports H.R. 2278 with amendments. The trail route authorized by this bill would serve as a tribute to the victims of the September 11, 2001 attacks and the heroes who responded to those attacks. If enacted this year, this bill would help mark the 20th anniversary of the September 11 attacks.

H.R. 2278 would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to designate the September 11th National Memorial Trail Route, a triangular route of approximately 1,300 miles that would link the National September 11 Memorial and Museum in New York City, the Pentagon Memorial in Arlington, Virginia, and the Flight 93 National Memorial in Somerset County, Pennsylvania. The bill provides that the trail route would be administered through the Flight 93 National Memorial, the only one of these three memorials administered by the National Park Service, and it specifies a range of activities to be undertaken by the Secretary in support of the designation. The bill further authorizes the Secretary to enter into cooperative agreements and memoranda of understanding with, and provide technical and financial assistance to, other Federal agencies, the State, localities, regional governmental bodies, and private entities.

The Department recommends amending the bill in several ways. First, we suggest that the bill establish the trail route upon enactment, rather than by the Secretary, and that it provide more specificity in the location of the trail by referencing a map that delineates the route. Currently, the bill contains a narrative description that does not give a complete picture of the location of route. Second, because there are other National Park Service parks and programs that could assume responsibility for administration of the trail route, we recommend deleting the requirement that it be administered specifically by Flight 93 National Memorial. We further recommend clarifying that the trail route would not be a unit of the National Park System or part of the National Trail System, since it would be an entity different from either of those types of designations.

In addition, we recommend addressing potential conflicts with the Commemorative Works Act (Act; 40 U.S.C. §§8901-8910) (CWA) that could arise from H.R. 2278. The CWA governs the establishment process for memorials located in the District of Columbia or its environs that are

under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service or the General Services Administration. This could mean that at most a small portion of the trail could be subject to the CWA. The CWA defines a commemorative work as “any statue, monument, sculpture, memorial, plaque, inscription, or other structure or landscape feature...designed to perpetuate in a permanent manner the memory of an individual, group, event or other significant element of American history...”. As a landscape feature, the proposed September 11th Memorial Trail Route fits within this definition. While it does not appear to be the intent of the bill to establish a new memorial, the placement of signage or plaques associated with the proposed trail could be subject to CWA. We recommend including language that would resolve any conflicts with the CWA without undermining the law’s intent.

We would be happy to work with the sponsor and the Committee to develop a legislative map and amendments for the purposes described in this statement.

Chairman Neguse, this concludes my statement. I would be pleased to answer any questions you or other members of the Subcommittee may have.

STATEMENT OF JOY BEASLEY, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, CULTURAL RESOURCES, PARTNERSHIPS, AND SCIENCE, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE HOUSE NATURAL RESOURCES SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS, AND PUBLIC LANDS, CONCERNING H.R. 2444, A BILL TO ESTABLISH FORT SAN GERÓNIMO DEL BOQUERÓN IN PUERTO RICO AS AN AFFILIATED AREA OF THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

MAY 27, 2021

Chairman Neguse, Ranking Member Fulcher, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to provide the Department of the Interior's views on H.R. 2444, a bill to establish Fort San Gerónimo Del Boquerón in Puerto Rico as an affiliated area of the National Park System, and for other purposes.

The Department supports H.R. 2444 with amendments. Designating this fort as an affiliated area would provide an appropriate way to assist in the protection and interpretation of an important resource associated with Spanish colonial history in Puerto Rico.

H.R. 2444 would establish Fort San Gerónimo del Boquerón (Fort San Gerónimo) as an affiliated area of the National Park System. The bill designates the Institute of Puerto Rican Culture, which currently manages the fort, as the management entity for the affiliated area and authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to provide technical assistance and enter into cooperative agreements with the management entity for the purpose of providing financial assistance for the marketing, marking, interpretation, and preservation of the affiliated area. As an affiliated area, Fort San Gerónimo would continue under non-federal ownership and management, but the management entity would be required to administer the site consistent with laws applicable to units of the National Park System.

Affiliated areas comprise a variety of locations in the United States that preserve significant properties outside of the National Park System. Some of these have been designated by Acts of Congress and others have been designated administratively. All draw on technical assistance or financial aid from the National Park Service (NPS).

For 500 years, San Juan, Puerto Rico played a key role in the European powers' command of the Caribbean as a strategic access point to the Americas. A massive fortification system was built by Spanish military engineers between the 16th and 19th centuries to protect the city. Three of the forts that were part of this system are included in the San Juan National Historic Site (NHS), administered by the NPS. Fort San Gerónimo, also part of this system, is a small, two-level, stone masonry fort listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983 and is now partially submerged in the Condado Lagoon.

Fort San Gerónimo was the subject of a special resource study by the NPS, conducted pursuant to Public Law 111-11, which directed the Secretary of the Interior to determine the national significance, suitability, and feasibility of including the fort and other related resources as part of

San Juan NHS and to consider alternative methods and means for the protection and interpretation of the fort. The study examined the fort under both the criteria for a new unit and as an addition to the boundary of San Juan NHS. The study findings were transmitted to Congress in March 2020.

Fort San Gerónimo was found to meet the special resource study criteria for national significance and suitability, but not feasibility, for establishing the site as a new unit. Among the numerous aspects of feasibility evaluated, the most prohibitive factor is the high cost of historic preservation treatment to repair and rehabilitate the fort, which is severely deteriorated and in poor condition. As a result of the negative feasibility findings, the need for direct National Park Service management was not evaluated in detail. The findings were similar when the NPS evaluated the fort specifically for inclusion in the boundary of San Juan NHS. However, the NPS recognizes that there is strong public support and a potential opportunity for enhancing the interpretation and preservation of Fort San Gerónimo. In cases such as this, where resources meet the criteria for national significance and suitability but not other criteria for inclusion in the National Park System, an affiliated area designation may be appropriate. We believe that is the case here.

While the Department supports H.R. 2444, we recommend amending the legislation to include a reference to a legislative map detailing the boundary of the proposed affiliated area. We also recommend clarifying section 3(g), relating to developing a general management plan, and deleting sections 3(h) and 3(i), which address private property protection and activities outside of the affiliated area, respectively, both of which we believe are unnecessary. We would be pleased to provide a legislative map and recommended amendments for these purposes.

Chairman Neguse, this concludes my statement. I would be pleased to answer any questions you or other members of the Subcommittee may have.