

STATEMENT OF DAVID VELA, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, OPERATIONS, EXERCISING THE AUTHORITY OF THE DIRECTOR, 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. 139, A BILL TO ESTABLISH THE SPRINGFIELD RACE RIOT NATIONAL HISTORIC MONUMENT IN THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

OCTOBER 29, 2019

Chairwoman Haaland, Ranking Member Young, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the Department of the Interior's views on H.R. 139, a bill to establish the Springfield Race Riot National Historic Monument in the State of Illinois, and for other purposes.

The Department recognizes the important contribution to America's story that is represented by the resources related to the Springfield Race Riot of 1908. A reconnaissance survey assessment of a site near Madison Street and the 10th Street Rail Corridor in Springfield, Illinois, associated with the 1908 Springfield Race Riot, completed in September, 2019, found the site is likely to meet the National Park Service's criteria for inclusion in the National Park System. Establishing a unit of the National Park System could be one way to preserve and interpret the resources and related stories of the 1908 Springfield Race Riot, but it may not be the most appropriate or feasible way to do so. If the Committee chooses to act on this bill, traditionally a special resource study could be authorized to develop management scenarios for the site, and to engage the public on potential National Park Service management.

H.R. 139 would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to establish the Springfield Race Riot National Historic Monument. The bill includes authorities for land acquisition and administration that are commonly included in legislation establishing a unit of the National Park System.

The Springfield site contains the foundations of five of the dozens of homes that were destroyed during the 1908 riot that engulfed the city. The riot was a multi-day affair, started by a white mob, directed against African American residents. The riot resulted in the lynching of two black men, assaults on many more, and the destruction of whole neighborhoods. The riot, trials, and aftermath of the events in Springfield drew national attention to racial violence and sparked direct action by many civil rights leaders.

The events in Springfield occurred in Abraham Lincoln's hometown, a few months before the centennial of his birth, and highlighted the lack of progress on race relations in America. In February 1909, leaders sparked by the Springfield riot formed the National Negro Committee, which would later become the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). The Springfield Race Riot site is important for its association with the creation of the NAACP and contributes to our understanding of racial violence in America.

In 2018, Representative Rodney Davis sent a letter to the National Park Service requesting a reconnaissance survey of the site. A reconnaissance survey provides a preliminary assessment—of the national significance, suitability, feasibility, and need for National Park Service management of an area or site proposed for inclusion in the National Park System. The reconnaissance survey found that the site near Madison Street and the 10th Street Rail Corridor, which is the key archeological site associated with the 1908 riot, is likely to meet the criteria for inclusion. It also appears to be a good candidate inclusion in the African American Civil Rights Network.

We note that the proposed designation for the site as a “national historic monument” is not a designation that Congress has given previously to any other unit of the National Park System. Should this bill move forward, the Department would strongly recommend that the title of this site be changed to “Springfield Race Riot National Historic Site” or “Springfield Race Riot National Memorial”, designations that are part of the National Park Service’s standard nomenclature. National historic site has been the title most commonly applied by Congress in authorizing the addition of areas that preserve archaeological and historic sites. The title national memorial is most often used for areas that are primarily commemorative, rather than sites or structures historically associated with their subjects.

While we recognize the important contribution of these resources related to the Springfield Race Riot of 1908, at a time when the Department needs to devote resources to reducing the National Park Service’s \$11.9 billion deferred maintenance backlog and addressing other critical national park needs, it would be difficult to prioritize a new park unit without having a better understanding of how it would relate to other National Park Service resources and needs. The Department urges Congress to pass legislation addressing the deferred maintenance needs of its bureaus.

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

STATEMENT OF DAVID VELA, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, OPERATIONS, EXERCISING THE AUTHORITY OF THE DIRECTOR, 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. 486, A BILL TO AUTHORIZE THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR TO CONDUCT A SPECIAL RESOURCE STUDY OF CHICANO PARK, LOCATED IN SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

OCTOBER 29, 2019

Chairwoman Haaland, Ranking Member Young, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the Department of the Interior's views on H.R. 486, a bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of Chicano Park, located in San Diego, California.

While the Department recognizes the national significance of Chicano Park and its monumental murals for their association with the Chicano Civil Rights Movement, we do not support authorizing a special resource study of the site, as H.R. 486 would do. Special resource studies are designed specifically to assess whether a site is appropriate for addition to the National Park System, which does not appear to be the goal of this bill. In addition, funding for special resource studies is not a priority as the Department's resources are needed to reduce the National Park Service's \$11.9 billion deferred maintenance backlog and for other critical national park needs. The Department urges Congress to pass legislation addressing the deferred maintenance needs of its bureaus.

Chicano Park and its murals are located under freeway overpasses on 7.4 acres of land owned by the City of San Diego and California Department of Transportation. The murals are painted on freeway vertical supports, abutments, and ramps and compose the largest collection of Chicano master mural artwork in the United States. In 2016, the site was designated a National Historic Landmark for its outstanding representation of the cultural and political legacies of the Chicano Civil Rights Movement.

Under 54 U.S.C. 100507, a special resource study is required to assess the national significance, suitability, feasibility and need for National Park Service management of an area to determine whether it is appropriate to recommend the site for inclusion in the National Park System. However, the study authorized by H.R. 486 would not allow consideration of any options that involve Federal acquisition of lands, interests in lands, or any other property related to Chicano Park and its murals. Given that limitation, it would not be appropriate to conduct a study to assess whether Chicano Park meets the criteria for inclusion in the National Park System.

H.R. 486 specifically calls for determining the suitability and feasibility of designating Chicano Park as an affiliated site, or area, of the National Park System. Generally, the designation of "affiliated area" has been given to nationally significant areas that are neither Federally owned nor directly administered by the National Park Service, but which utilize National Park Service assistance. Affiliated areas are not considered units of the National Park System, but owners of

affiliated areas are required to manage the site to the same standards as a unit of the National Park System. Occasionally special resource studies recommend affiliated area designation when a site is nationally significant but does not meet the other criteria for inclusion in the National Park System. Affiliated areas can be designated legislatively or administratively.

If the committee decides to move forward on authorizing a special resource study, the Department would appreciate the opportunity to offer technical amendments to the bill.

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

STATEMENT OF DAVID VELA, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, OPERATIONS, EXERCISING THE AUTHORITY OF THE DIRECTOR, 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. 3250, A BILL TO REQUIRE THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR TO CONDUCT A SPECIAL RESOURCE STUDY OF THE SITES ASSOCIATED WITH THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF NOTED AMERICAN PHILANTHROPIST AND BUSINESS EXECUTIVE JULIUS ROSEWALD, WITH A SPECIAL FOCUS ON THE ROSEWALD SCHOOLS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

OCTOBER 29, 2019

Chairwoman Haaland, Ranking Member Young, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to provide the Department of the Interior's views on H.R. 3250, a bill to require the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of the sites associated with the life and legacy of noted American philanthropist and business executive Julius Rosenwald, with a special focus on the Rosenwald Schools, and for other purposes.

The Department recognizes that Julius Rosenwald and the Rosenwald Schools represent an important story in American history. However, we do not support enactment of H.R. 3250 at this time, as resources are needed to reduce the National Park Service's \$11.9 billion deferred maintenance backlog and address other critical national park needs. The Department urges Congress to pass legislation addressing the deferred maintenance needs of its bureaus.

Julius Rosenwald left a remarkable legacy, including his significant philanthropic contributions to the construction of schools for African-American children under the direction of the Julius Rosenwald Fund. The school program was created in partnership with Booker T. Washington and funded through donations from Julius Rosenwald and local African-American communities, resulting in the construction of over 5,000 schools and associated buildings in 15 states. The Rosenwald School system was instrumental in the effort to bring educational parity to African-American children living in the segregated South.

The NPS supports the preservation of Rosenwald Schools and the legacy of Julius Rosenwald through programs we administer directly, as well as in partnership with other organizations. Nearly 70 Rosenwald Schools located across 12 states are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Eight State Historic Preservation Offices have developed National Register procedures to facilitate the identification and nomination of these important historic resources. The NPS has provided over \$600,000 in grants that supported the restoration of Rosenwald Schools, the architectural survey and nomination of school sites, the development of education and outreach materials, and the preservation and digitization of the Rosenwald School archives housed at Fisk University. We also note the tremendous work being achieved by the National Trust for Historic Preservation through their Rosenwald Schools Initiative including extensive research of the sites, providing grant funding to the properties, hosting workshops, and creating publications on how to preserve Rosenwald Schools.

H.R. 3250 calls for the study of “sites associated with the life and legacy of Julius Rosenwald, with special emphasis on the Rosenwald Schools”. The Department has concerns about the breadth of subject matter that phrase might cover. If the Committee decides to move forward with this legislation, we would appreciate the opportunity to work with the Committee to refine the scope of the study.

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

STATEMENT OF DAVID VELA, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, OPERATIONS, EXERCISING THE AUTHORITY OF THE DIRECTOR, 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. 3824, A BILL TO ESTABLISH THE CAHOKIA MOUNDS MISSISSIPPIAN CULTURE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK IN COLLINSVILLE, ILLINOIS, MONROE, MADISON, AND ST. CLAIR COUNTIES, ILLINOIS, AND ST. LOUIS CITY COUNTY, MISSOURI, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

OCTOBER 29, 2019

Chairwoman Haaland, Ranking Member Young, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to provide the Department of the Interior's views on H.R. 3824, a bill to establish the Cahokia Mounds Mississippian Culture National Historical Park in Collinsville, Illinois, Monroe, Madison, and St. Clair Counties, Illinois, and St. Louis City County, Missouri, and for other purposes.

The Department recognizes the important contribution to America's story that is represented by the resources related to Cahokia Mounds and other Mississippian mound sites in the greater St. Louis Area. If the Committee chooses to act on this bill, we would recommend amending H.R. 3824 to authorize a special resource study limited to Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site, as well as Emerald, and Pulcher mounds, as recommended by the National Park Service's recently completed reconnaissance survey of the site. If the Committee moves forward on designating the site, we would recommend replacing the map referenced in the bill.

Establishing a unit of the National Park System could be one way to preserve and interpret the resources and related stories of Cahokia Mounds, but it may not be the most appropriate or feasible way to do so. In addition, at a time when the Department needs to devote resources to reducing the National Park Service's \$11.9 billion deferred maintenance backlog and addressing other critical national park needs, it would be difficult to prioritize a new park unit without having a better understanding of how it would relate to other National Park Service resources and needs. The Department urges Congress to pass legislation addressing the deferred maintenance needs of its bureaus.

H.R. 3824 would authorize the establishment of the Cahokia Mounds Mississippian Culture National Historical Park. The bill would authorize a boundary for the National Historical Park as depicted on the legislative map referenced in the bill. However, it is unclear what areas would be included in the National Historical Park as the map referenced does not depict any proposed boundary. The bill further authorizes the Secretary to acquire any land within the legislative boundary of the park by acquisition, donation, or exchange, with the exception that State owned lands could only be acquired through donation. H.R. 3824 also authorizes the Secretary to enter in agreements with the State and other entities to interpret and restore resources within the boundaries of the park, and directs the Secretary to prepare a management plan for the park in consultation with the State, Indian Tribes, and other entities.

The mounds at Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site were a regional ceremonial and civic center for the Mississippian people, the name given by archeologists to the societies that lived in the Southeastern and Midwestern United States after about AD 1000. In addition to the core area of the mounds preserved by the state park, there were many related settlements and outlying sites. Earthen monuments, mounds, and the remnants of cities, towns, and villages built by the Mississippians are found across the southeastern and midwestern United States. The most significant of these places is Cahokia Mounds. Cahokia is the centerpiece of one of the most densely settled regions in ancient North America, located at the confluence of the Mississippi, Missouri, and Illinois rivers.

Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site is administered by the Illinois State Historic Preservation Agency. It was designated a National Historic Landmark (NHL) in 1964 and a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1982. Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site includes 51 extant mounds, the most prominent of which is Monks Mound. Monks Mound and the central part of the site were purchased by the state of Illinois in 1923 and have been administered by the state ever since. The site gradually grew from the initial 144 acres to 2,200 acres. Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site now includes mounds, public areas, and non-public residential areas.

The State of Illinois can acquire ownership of property within the boundaries of the Cahokia Mounds National Historic Landmark. Slightly more than half of the acreage within the National Historic Landmark boundaries is owned by the State Historic Site; the balance is held by nonprofit and private owners. Approximately 7,000-10,000 people live within the boundary of the National Historic Landmark.

In 2014, Senator Richard Durbin sent a letter to the National Park Service requesting a reconnaissance survey of the Cahokia Mounds and associated Mississippian mound groups in the greater St. Louis metro region. A reconnaissance survey provides a preliminary assessment of the national significance, suitability, feasibility, and need for National Park Service management of an area or site proposed for inclusion in the National Park System. If a reconnaissance survey finds that a study area is likely to meet these criteria, a special resource study may be recommended.

The completed reconnaissance survey, transmitted to Congress in July 2019, found that Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site would likely meet the criteria for inclusion in the National Park System if further evaluated in a subsequent study, and identified two additional sites – Emerald and Pulcher Mounds – as warranting further study to make definitive findings. The reconnaissance survey recommended that a special resource study be authorized for these three sites to further evaluate criteria for inclusion, invite public involvement in the study process, and develop potential management alternatives. The remainder of the sites considered in the survey – including the St. Louis Mound Group, East St. Louis Mounds, Mitchell Mounds, and Sugar Loaf Mounds – were determined to be unlikely to meet the criteria for inclusion and were not recommended for additional study.

For these reasons, if the Committee chose to act on this bill, we would recommend amending the bill to provide for a special resource study limited to the three sites noted in the reconnaissance

survey, rather than the establishment of a new unit of the National Park System. We would be happy to provide suggested language for such an amendment.

Finally, the map referenced in the bill was not developed by the National Park Service and does not conform to the standard conventions for NPS legislative maps. The current map, cited in the bill as “Cahokia Mounds Mississippian Culture National Historical Park, Boundary, numbered CMMC-NHP-107, and dated 05-31-2019” does not provide sufficient detail or clarity regarding the legislative boundary. Without a clear map, we cannot determine what areas would be included in the National Historical Park. For this reason, should designation legislation move forward, we strongly recommend substituting a legislative map developed by the National Park Service for the current map referenced in H.R. 3824. We would be happy to work with the bill sponsor to develop a suitable map.

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

STATEMENT OF DAVID VELA, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, OPERATIONS, EXERCISING THE AUTHORITY OF DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE HOUSE NATURAL RESOURCES SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS, AND PUBLIC LANDS, REGARDING H.R. 4139, A BILL TO PROVIDE FOR THE BOUNDARY OF THE PALO ALTO BATTLEFIELD NATIONAL HISTORIC PARK TO BE ADJUSTED, TO AUTHORIZE THE DONATION OF LAND TO THE UNITED STATES FOR ADDITION TO THAT HISTORIC PARK, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

OCTOBER 29, 2019

Chairwoman Haaland, Ranking Member Young, members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to provide the Department of Interior's views on H.R. 4139, a bill to provide for the boundary of the Palo Alto Battlefield National Historic Park to be adjusted, to authorize the donation of land to the United States for addition to that historic park, and for other purposes.

Because the National Park Service has not studied the appropriateness and feasibility of adding Fort Brown to the Palo Alto Battlefield National Park, as contemplated by H.R. 4139, we do not support this legislation. In addition, the Department needs to focus its resources on addressing the National Park Service's \$11.9 billion deferred maintenance backlog and other critical National Park Service needs. The Department urges Congress to pass legislation addressing the deferred maintenance needs of its bureaus.

H.R. 4139 would add the approximately 166 acres of land where Fort Brown stood to the Palo Alto Battlefield National Historical Park. The land, which is owned and administered by the International Boundary Water Commission, holds the archeological remains of Fort Brown, including the standing ruins of the Fort Brown earthworks, associated fortifications, and the cultural landscape of the Fort Brown siege of 1846. The fort, originally known as Fort Texas, was established when U.S. soldiers led by General Zachary Taylor arrived on the banks of the Rio Grande to establish the river as the southern boundary of Texas. General Taylor, who would become the 12th President of the United States in 1849, re-named the fort in honor of Major Jacob Brown, who was killed during the siege.

A portion of the Fort Brown site was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1960. It is one of three battlefield sites in the Brownsville area considered key to telling the story of the 1846-48 United States war with Mexico. The other two sites are currently included within Palo Alto Battlefield National Historical Park.

Fort Brown became the flashpoint in a dispute over the boundary between two nations. As events unfolded, the Mexican Army laid siege to the fort in early May 1846. The site remained active following the war with Mexico and played a role in every U.S. war through World War II. The U.S. Army closed Fort Brown in 1944 and turned the 166-acre area over to the International Boundary and Water Commission in 1949 for flood control purposes.

If the Committee chooses to act on H.R. 4139, the Department would recommend amending the bill to authorize a boundary study to look at the feasibility of administering the Fort Brown site

as part of Palo Alto Battlefield National Historical Park, rather than authorizing the site to be added to the park. It is a standard practice of the National Park Service to conduct a study for a proposed major addition to a unit of the National Park System before recommending adding it to an existing park. A study would also evaluate the views of and impacts on local communities, the adequacy of other alternatives for management and resource protection, and other factors. We also would recommend a technical amendment to correct the park name used in the title of the bill from “Palo Alto Battlefield National Historic Park” to “Palo Alto Battlefield National Historical Park”. We would be happy to work with the committee on these amendments.

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