

STATEMENT OF LENA MCDOWALL, DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION, 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. 1548 TO ESTABLISH A PILOT PROGRAM FOR NATIVE PLANT SPECIES

JUNE 14, 2022

Chair 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. 1548, the Native Plant Species Pilot Program Act of 2021.

The Department supports H.R. 1548.

H.R. 1548, the Native Plant Species Pilot Program Act of 2021, would create a pilot program to utilize native plant materials in projects within National Park Service units to protect native plant biodiversity. The bill complements and enhances how the National Park Service utilizes native plant materials for revegetation on projects throughout the Service.

H.R. 1548 is aligned with the National Park Service mission and NPS 2006 Management Policies. National Park System units acquire native plant materials through a variety of mechanisms including greenhouses, seed storage capacity, native plant nurseries within park units, and by working with partners to obtain native plant materials for restoration activities. For example, at Flight 93 National Memorial, on a former surface mine restoration project, more than 4,200 volunteers have planted 41 varieties of native trees and shrubs across 197 acres. At Devil's Tower National Monument, park staff and contractors used locally collected native plant seed to restore 3 acres of disturbed land at the park's visitor center and along the popular Power Trail to Devil's Tower. At Pea Ridge National Military Park, National Park Service staff and contractors collected native seed from remnant prairies and planted them in agricultural fields outside the park. The seed and plants will be harvested and used to restore 30 acres of Civil War battlefield, including an obliterated highway, existing roadways, and areas near the park's Visitor Center.

Finally, the NPS would like to work with the sponsor and the Committee to address technical edits regarding the implementation of the bill.

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

STATEMENT OF LENA MCDOWALL, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION, 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. 4658 TO DESIGNATE THE ENCINAL TRAILHEAD ON THE BACKBONE TRAIL IN SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS NATIONAL RECREATION AREA AS THE “ANTHONY ‘TONY’ BEILENSON TRAILHEAD”

June 14, 2022

Chair 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. 4658, a bill to designate the Encinal Trailhead on the Backbone Trail in Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area as the “Anthony ‘Tony’ Beilenson Trailhead”.

The Department supports H.R. 4658 with an amendment.

H.R. 4658 would recognize the contributions that former Representative Anthony C. Beilenson made toward the creation and protection of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area by naming the Encinal Trailhead on the Backbone Trail in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area after him. The bill states that any reference to the Encinal Trailhead would be considered a reference to the Anthony “Tony” Beilenson Trailhead.

In 1977, Representative Beilenson introduced legislation to protect lands within the Santa Monica Mountains and Simi Hills in southern California. This legislation became part of the National Parks and Recreation Act (Public Law 95-625), which established the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, the largest urban national park unit, by area, in the country when it was signed into law by President Carter.

During his many years in Congress, Representative Beilenson continually advocated for funding for land acquisition and protection for the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. His efforts led to the protection of more than 23,000 acres of land, including sensitive habitats, scenic vistas, and cultural sites associated with the Chumash and Tongva peoples, as well as the history of Hollywood. All Americans can now enjoy these natural and cultural spaces.

To be recognized in a unit of the National Park System is a high honor. The National Park Service generally discourages commemorative naming of park features except when there is a compelling justification for the recognition, there is a strong association between the park and the person being commemorated, and at least five years have elapsed since the death of the person. These criteria apply to Representative Beilenson, and we believe this legislation is an appropriate way to recognize his role in protecting the Santa Monica Mountains.

Regarding the proposed designation of the trailhead in H.R. 4658, we recommend amending the bill to designate the “Anthony C. Beilenson Trailhead” so that the name used for the trailhead is

consistent with the name used for the Santa Monica Mountains Anthony C. Beilenson Interagency Visitor Center, which was previously designated by an act of Congress.

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

STATEMENT OF LENA MCDOWALL, DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION, 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. 6364 TO AMEND THE DELAWARE WATER GAP NATIONAL RECREATION AREA IMPROVEMENT ACT TO EXTEND THE EXCEPTION TO THE CLOSURE OF CERTAIN ROADS WITHIN THE RECREATION AREA FOR LOCAL BUSINSSES

JUNE 14, 2022

Chair 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. 6364, a bill to amend the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area Improvement Act to extend the exception to the closure of certain roads within the recreation area for local businesses.

The Department supports H.R. 6364.

H.R. 6364 would amend Section 4(b) of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area Improvement Act (P.L. 109-156 as amended) to extend the use of certain roads within Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area through September 30, 2026. The bill would extend the authority of the National Park Service (NPS) to allow commercial vehicles serving local businesses to use Federal Road 209 through a permit and fee program. The current authority expires on September 30, 2022.

The extension would authorize the park to continue issuing permits to commercial vehicle operators owned by businesses located in or adjacent to the recreation area or necessary to provide services to businesses or persons located in or adjacent to the recreation area enabling them to travel through the park. Route 209 provides a safe, efficient and cost-effective transportation route for these adjacent communities. This permitted access contributes to the economic vitality, public safety and quality of life of the park's adjacent communities.

Permits are not required for local school buses, and fire, ambulance, and other safety or emergency vehicles.

Finally, the Department would like to work with the sponsor and Committee on a technical edit to the public law reference in the bill.

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

STATEMENT OF LENA MCDOWALL, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION, 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. 6442 TO AMEND SECTION 101703 OF TITLE 54, UNITED STATES CODE, TO INCLUDE TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS AND QUASI-GOVERNMENTAL ENTITIES

June 14, 2022

Chair 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.6442, a bill to amend section 101703 of title 54, United States Code, to include Tribal Governments and quasi-governmental entities.

The Department supports H.R. 6442 with amendments.

H.R. 6442 would expand the National Park Service's (NPS) cooperative management agreements authority established by the National Park Omnibus Management Act of 1998. The existing authority allows for more effective and efficient management of NPS units through the sharing of goods and services with neighboring state and local parks. Under cooperative management agreements, employees of the cooperating agencies can perform important tasks in national parks or neighboring park lands, benefiting both entities. Examples of cooperatively managed services include snow plowing, recycling collection, and tree removal.

H.R. 6442 would amend the cooperative management agreement authority to allow the NPS to enter cooperative management agreements with a broader range of entities, including Tribal governments and quasi-governmental entities. The bill would also remove the requirement that the cooperating agency be adjacent to or near an NPS unit.

The expanded authority provided by H.R. 6442 would allow the NPS to achieve greater efficiency in operations and facilitate the improved operations of its neighbors, cooperating to provide, for example, educational programs, visitor services, infrastructure support, and historic preservation. Additionally, as natural and cultural landscapes extend well beyond park boundaries, the broader geographic scope provided by H.R. 6442 would allow the NPS to improve operational efficiencies and better serve visitors by sharing more goods and services with more agencies. This is particularly important for expanding agreements with Tribal communities that may not be adjacent to the NPS-managed lands to which they have deep cultural connections. H.R. 6442 has the potential to facilitate the NPS's ability to meet the call of Joint Secretarial Order 3403, issued by the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior, which affirmed the Departments' trust responsibility to Tribes and called for the development of co-stewardship agreements.

The Department would like to work with the bill's sponsor and the Subcommittee on several amendments to refine the bill. In lieu of extending this authority to "quasi-governmental entities" we recommend identifying the specific types of entities that would be eligible. We also

recommend including a provision to clarify authority for the entities engaged in cooperative management to co-locate offices and share facilities. Additionally, we recommend clarifying the authority and mechanism for the exchange of funds for goods and services and including language to permit the NPS to retain reimbursements received.

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

STATEMENT OF LENA MCDOWALL, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION, 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. 7496, A BILL TO DIRECT THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR TO INSTALL A PLAQUE AT THE PEAK OF RAM HEAD IN THE VIRGIN ISLANDS NATIONAL PARK ON ST. JOHN, UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS, TO COMMEMORATE THE SLAVE REBELLION THAT BEGAN ON ST. JOHN IN 1733

JUNE 14, 2022

Chair 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. 7496, a bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to install a plaque at the peak of Ram Head in the Virgin Islands National Park on St. John, United States Virgin Islands, to commemorate the slave rebellion that began on St. John in 1733.

The Department supports H.R. 7496 with amendments that would address the concerns described in this statement.

H.R. 7496 would direct the Secretary of the Interior to install a suitable plaque to commemorate the slave rebellion that began on St. John on November 23, 1733, in an appropriate location in the area of the Ram Head trail at the peak of Ram Head in the Virgin Islands National Park, within one year of the date of enactment of the bill. The bill specifies that the plaque would include information regarding important facts about the rebellion; the collective suicide that occurred in the vicinity of Ram Head on St. John in 1734; and the significance of the rebellion to the history of St. John, the United States Virgin Islands, and the United States.

Written accounts of the resistance to enslavement describe an organized, methodical movement that rapidly spread across the Danish West Indies colony of St. John. One hundred forty-six enslaved Africans sought relief from increasingly harsh conditions of enslavement and a restoration of freedom for their people. These men and women largely represented the Akwamu Nation in western Africa.

The uprising spanned nine months and was one of the earliest and most sustained resistance efforts in the “New World,” sparking subsequent fights for freedom across the Caribbean. Freedom seekers advanced upon multiple plantations on St. John, in areas now protected as part of Virgin Islands National Park. Battles ensued at Cinnamon Bay and at the Duurloo Estate, or present-day Caneel Bay. The freedom seekers were ultimately overpowered by the efforts of colonial forces, facing death upon capture. Archival records reveal that some freedom seekers experienced extreme torture and horrific public executions. Some were falsely promised clemency, while still others, beginning in May 1734, made the ultimate sacrifice, choosing death over the prospect of persecution.

Enslaved St. Johnians continued their march toward freedom throughout the era of colonial enslavement, intensifying efforts once the British declared emancipation in 1834. Approximately 100 enslaved people successfully fled Danish St. John along the Leinster Bay Waterfront to the British island of Tortola over a 14-year period, under the constant threat of capture. In 2021, in recognition of the significance of this site of escape, the National Park Service (NPS) added Leinster Bay Waterfront to the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom.

We believe strongly in the importance of promoting public knowledge and understanding of the 1733 uprising and its significance in the movement to end slavery throughout the western hemisphere. The NPS takes seriously its duty to tell the whole story of America's heritage. Across the system, NPS staff and partners help audiences navigate sometimes difficult truths with care and compassion, recognizing the potential for these experiences to help transform understanding through the conveyance of history and knowledge.

However, we recommend that H.R. 7496 be amended to provide more flexibility in the means of commemorating and interpreting this story. Before acting to install any interpretive material on the events that began in 1733, we would like to have the opportunity to engage the public on the design and siting of an exhibit. There are difficult aspects to the story, especially with respect to the collective suicides from the Ram Head Peak and Brown Bay areas, that need to be approached with accuracy, integrity, sensitivity, and a concern for public safety. A planning process that includes robust public engagement would help achieve that objective.

We would also like to note that a permanent plaque is different from a non-permanent wayside marker or other non-permanent means of commemoration. Over time, a plaque has the potential to become a historic object itself and part of the historic landscape. The NPS' Management Policies, in particular, section 9.6, support careful consideration before adding new commemorative works that have the potential to become historic objects and alter historic landscapes, and state that a plaque should not be used unless it increases visitor understanding and will do so more effectively than other interpretive media.

We would be happy to work with the bill sponsor and Committee on language to provide the National Park Service with the flexibility recommended in this statement.

Finally, the Subcommittee's hearing on H.R. 7496 is timely, as June is Caribbean-American Heritage Month. The Department appreciates the opportunity to express support for the effort to honor the sacrifices of enslaved individuals living on St. John who summoned unimaginable courage to break the first links in the chain of systematic chattel slavery everywhere.

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

STATEMENT OF LENA MCDOWALL, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION, 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. 7592, A BILL TO AUTHORIZE THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR TO ISSUE A RIGHT-OF-WAY PERMIT WITH RESPECT TO A NATURAL GAS DISTRIBUTION PIPELINE WITHIN VALLEY FORGE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK.

JUNE 14, 2022

Chair 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. 7592, a bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to issue a right-of-way permit with respect to a natural gas distribution pipeline within Valley Forge National Historical Park.

The Department supports H.R. 7592

H.R. 7592 authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to issue a right-of-way permit for the relocation of an existing covered pipeline segment to the specific proposed realignment of Valley Forge Road and North Gulph Road within Valley Forge National Historical Park. The bill would prohibit the right-of-way permit from allowing any expansion, upgrade or improvement of the covered pipeline segment except as may be required by law for the safe operation and maintenance of the pipeline. Further, the bill limits the scope of the authority to grant the right-of-way permit only to the covered pipeline segment as described in the bill.

The relocation of the existing covered pipeline segment to the proposed realignment of Valley Forge Road and North Gulph Road will enable the completion of the final phase of a major four-phase Pennsylvania state-funded transportation project to improve the traffic flow around Valley Forge National Historical Park associated with US Route 422. The previous three phases of this project eased traffic in other places but increased traffic approaching the park entrance. The final phase of the project, which would address traffic impacts to the park, has been funded.

This relocation of North Gulph Road is highly beneficial to the park as it will reconnect approximately eight acres of disconnected National Park Service owned lands to the park, create an appropriate and scenic main park gateway entrance, and relocate the large traffic intersection away from the park. The relocation will make it possible to regrade and pave the former roadbed as a multiuse trail that will connect to an external trail network and public transit. This would significantly improve the visitor experience and visitor access to Valley Forge National Historical Park.

The project will also resolve a safety issue by enabling the replacement of an undersized culvert and alterations to the road configuration that would eliminate road hazards and improve safe pedestrian access.

Multiple utilities currently occupy the existing road including the covered natural gas pipeline, a buried water line, and aerial telecom and electrical poles with multiple co-locators. These utilities service the local community and were installed prior to National Park Service ownership with authorization from the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation. Resolving the utilities issue is the last critical step necessary to advance this phase of the North Gulph Road relocation project. The National Park Service has general authority to issue right-of-way permits for the water line, aerial telecom lines, and electric poles but not for the existing natural gas line. Once a right-of-way for the relocation of the covered natural gas pipeline can be issued, compliance and land transfer documents can be finalized, and construction can begin.

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