

**STATEMENT OF MICHAEL A. CALDWELL, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, PARK PLANNING, FACILITIES, AND LANDS, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SENATE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS CONCERNING S. 3447, A BILL TO AUTHORIZE THE NATIONAL SERVICE ANIMALS MEMORIAL ACT.**

**SEPTEMBER 21, 2022**

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Chairman King, Ranking Member Daines, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the Department of the Interior's views on S. 3447, a bill to authorize the National Service Animals Memorial Act.

The Department supports this legislation.

S. 3447 would authorize the National Service Animals Monument Corporation to establish a commemorative work in the Nation's Capital to commemorate the heroic deeds and sacrifices of service animals and handlers of service animals in the United States. The bill requires compliance with the Commemorative Works Act (40 U.S.C. Chapter 89) (CWA), prohibits federal funds from being used to establish the memorial, and provides direction on the disposition of unspent funds.

Service animals have assisted, comforted, and protected American lives throughout our Nation's history. The bill's findings note that "service and working animals, such as dogs, horses, homing pigeons, donkeys, mules, dolphins, sea lions, and others, have worked alongside and supported humans throughout history and have created strong human-animal bonds."

On March 21, 2022, the National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission (Commission) met to review S. 3447 and its companion bill, H.R. 6353. Under the CWA, Congress is required to solicit the views of the Commission when considering legislation authorizing commemorative works within the District of Columbia and its environs. The Commission heard from representatives of the National Service Animals Monument Corporation, the House and Senate bill sponsors, and approximately 30 members of the public in support of the bills. These speakers discussed a range of scenarios in which interaction with service animals has enhanced both human and animal quality of life. They spoke of animals who serve as first responders and therapy companions, assist in search and rescue operations, provide protection during war, carry messages, detect explosives, dangerous chemicals, and disease, and much more.

The Commission agreed that the array of ways service animals have enhanced human life was "a subject of lasting historical significance" to the United States. Commissioners noted that the various aspects of service by animals in key events in the Nation's history crosses over many themes and adds to the complexity of the subject matter. They observed that the legislation's commemorative subject is not service animals themselves, but the "heroic deeds and sacrifices" of service animals and their handlers. The CWA defines a commemorative work as "designed to perpetuate in a permanent manner the memory of an individual, group, event or other significant

element of American history.” The Commission concluded that the heroic deeds and sacrifices of service animals and their handlers constituted a “significant element” of American history and unanimously supported the legislation. The Department concurs with the Commission’s observation and conclusions.

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