

**STATEMENT OF P. DANIEL SMITH, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, EXERCISING THE  
AUTHORITY OF THE DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, U.S.  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SENATE ENERGY AND  
NATURAL RESOURCES SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, CONCERNING  
H.R. 6077, A BILL RECOGNIZING THE NATIONAL COMEDY CENTER IN  
JAMESTOWN, NEW YORK.**

**December 12, 2018**

---

Chairman Daines, Ranking Member King, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the Department of the Interior's views on H.R. 6077, a bill recognizing the National Comedy Center (Center) in Jamestown, New York.

The Department has no objection to H.R. 6077, as the Center is located at a site that is not under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior, and this bill does not provide for any management or funding by the National Park Service. However, we ask the Subcommittee to note the concern described below.

H.R. 6077 would officially designate the National Comedy Center in Jamestown, New York as the National Comedy Center and would recognize it as the only museum of its kind that exists for the exclusive purpose of celebrating comedy in America. The Center is a museum and non-profit organization dedicated to telling the story of comedy. It opened in 2018 and was established using Federal, state, and private philanthropic funding.

This legislation explicitly states that the Center is not a unit of the National Park System. However, the use of the title "National" creates a reasonable expectation among the general public that the museum must have an affiliation with the Federal government. This is not the first time this issue has arisen, nor is it likely to be the last, and the Department respectfully encourages only the most thoughtful and judicious designation of any similar, future "national" sites.

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