

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 S. 599 AND H.R. 1488, BILLS TO RETITLE, OR REDESIGNATE, THE INDIANA DUNES NATIONAL LAKESHORE AS THE INDIANA DUNES NATIONAL PARK, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

AUGUST 15, 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 S. 599 and H.R. 1488, bills to retitle, or redesignate, Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore as Indiana Dunes National Park, and for other purposes.

The Department of the Interior does not support redesignating Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore as Indiana Dunes National Park, as this change would be inconsistent with the National Park Service's naming conventions for different types of park units. The Department has no objection to redesignating the national lakeshore's Miller-Woods Trail as the "Paul H. Douglas Trail", as provided for by H.R. 1488.

Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, located along fifteen miles of the southern shores of Lake Michigan between Gary and Michigan City, Indiana, was authorized by Congress on November 5, 1966. The designation of the national lakeshore as a unit of the National Park System was the culmination of decades of work by conservationists, area residents and elected officials to preserve the unique area of dunes on Lake Michigan's southern shore that began in 1899. The enabling legislation authorized the inclusion of 8,330 acres of land and water, and several subsequent authorizations increased the size of the national lakeshore to more than 15,000 acres.

Although we understand the desire of the bills' sponsors and proponents to bring greater recognition of the significant resources and opportunities for recreation available at Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, the National Park Service believes that the current designation is appropriate for the unit and in keeping with our efforts to provide consistency in the naming of park units. The National Park Service encourages Congress to follow a standard pattern of nomenclature for units of the National Park System. Our preference is that the designation of "national park" be reserved for units that contain a variety of resources and encompass large land or water areas to help provide adequate protection of the resources, and that in general, similar types of units have consistent designations. Indiana Dunes has more in common with the other Great Lakes national lakeshores—Apostle Islands, Pictured Rocks, and Sleeping Bear Dunes—and with the National Park System's many other national seashores and national recreation areas, than with most national parks. Indiana Dunes is the smallest of the four lakeshore units, and the only one of the four that does not include any designated wilderness.

The Department does not object to the provision of H.R. 1488 that would redesignate the Miller-Woods Trail within Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore as the "Paul H. Douglas Trail". While permanent tribute in a unit of the national park system is a high honor, excessive or inappropriate

use of memorializing people in parks can divert attention from the resources and values the parks were established to preserve and interpret. Therefore, the National Park Service discourages the practice except when there is a compelling justification for the recognition.

We believe that there is a compelling justification for designating the “Paul H. Douglas Trail”. Paul Howard Douglas served as a United States Senator from the State of Illinois from 1949 to 1967 and was instrumental in the establishment of Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. The lakeshore’s Center for Environmental Education, located at the trailhead of the Miller-Woods trail system, is already named for the Senator. The Miller-Woods trail is named for the surrounding neighborhood, and does not refer to a particular person.

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