

STATEMENT OF STEPHANIE TOOTHMAN, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, CULTURAL RESOURCES, PARTNERSHIPS AND SCIENCE, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, OF THE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES, CONCERNING S. 524, A BILL TO AMEND THE NATIONAL TRAILS SYSTEM ACT TO PROVIDE FOR A STUDY OF THE PIKE NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL

July 31, 2013

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today and present the Department's views on S. 524, a bill to amend the National Trails System Act to provide for a study of the Pike National Historic Trail.

The Department supports S. 524. However, we feel that priority should be given to the 30 previously authorized studies for potential units of the National Park System, potential new National Heritage Areas, and potential additions to the National Trails System and National Wild and Scenic Rivers System that have not yet been transmitted to Congress.

S. 524 would amend Section 5(c) of the National Trails System Act by directing the Secretary to conduct a study of the Pike National Historic Trail for consideration for inclusion in the National Trails System. We estimate the cost of this study to be approximately \$800,000.

The Pike National Historic Trail is a series of routes extending approximately 3,664 miles, which follows the route taken by Lt. Zebulon Montgomery Pike during the 1806–1807 Pike expedition that began in Fort Bellefontaine, Missouri, extended through portions of the States of Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas, and ended in Natchitoches, Louisiana.

U.S. Army General James Wilkinson launched the 1806-1807 Pike expedition to provide an escort for Osage Indians traveling from St. Louis back to their villages, make contact with Native American groups on the plains, explore the headwaters of the Arkansas and Red Rivers, and collect information about the Spanish along the southwestern border of the Louisiana Purchase. Lt. Pike and his men explored the headwaters of the Arkansas and Platte Rivers in Colorado before crossing the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, near both the present-day Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve, and the headwaters of the Rio Grande River. Pike's group built a small stockade near modern-day Alamosa, Colorado, where they were captured by the Spanish and taken back to Mexico. Pike and the majority of his men were returned to U.S. territory at Natchitoches, Louisiana, on June 30, 1807. While not as famous as the Lewis and Clark expedition, the Pike expedition was the first American-led effort to explore the Rocky Mountains and is an important part of the history of Colorado and the American Southwest.

A study produced by the National Park Service would not only look at the national significance and eligibility of the trail, but also its feasibility and suitability as a unit of the National Trails System. We envision the Pike National Historic Trail study to focus on exploring recreational opportunities, defining historical aspects of the trail, and establishing methods for a working

relationship with partners in order to identify facilities on adjacent lands that would contribute to the purposes of the trail.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my testimony. I would be happy to answer any questions you or other members of the subcommittee may have.