

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. 1220, A BILL TO ESTABLISH THE ADAMS MEMORIAL COMMISSION TO CARRY OUT THE PROVISIONS OF PUBLIC LAW 107-62.

December 12, 2018

Chairman Daines, Ranking Member King, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the views of the Department of the Interior on H.R. 1220, a bill to establish the Adams Memorial Commission to carry out the provisions of Public Law 107-62.

The Department does not object to H.R. 1220 in general and recommends an amendment described later in this statement. The Department defers to the Department of Justice for views on the commission structure and composition provided in the bill.

In 2001, Public Law 107-62 authorized the Adams Memorial Foundation (Foundation) to establish a commemorative work on Federal land in the District of Columbia to honor former President John Adams and his legacy. H.R. 1220 would establish an Adams Memorial Commission (Commission) as the entity responsible for all aspects of establishing the commemorative work that the Foundation is responsible for under current law. The bill specifies the Commission's membership, meeting schedule, authorities, and responsibilities.

Despite the good work of the Foundation for the past 16 years, it has yet to achieve its goal of establishing an Adams Memorial. Congress has provided the Foundation with several extensions of the seven-year time frame for establishing a memorial, as delineated in the Commemorative Works Act. The Foundation's current authority will expire on December 2, 2020.

In 2003, Congress approved locating the Adams Memorial in the monumental core area of Washington, DC, referred to in the Commemorative Works Act as Area I. This approval signaled congressional recognition that Adams, his wife Abigail, their son John Quincy, and many of their descendants who distinguished themselves as statesmen, diplomats, advocates and authors, made civic contributions of "preeminent historical and lasting significance to the United States," the standard required for locating a commemorative work in Area I.

The Department agrees that the transition of responsibility for the memorial from a private foundation to a federal commission would likely result in greater success in moving toward a completed memorial. The President, the Senate, and the House of Representatives would each appoint four members, equally split between the two political parties, for a total of 12 members equally divided by party. The Commission would report its plans for a permanent memorial to the President and Congress at the first practicable date and, in the meantime, make annual reports to the President and Congress on its progress. These requirements for member composition and reporting responsibilities would provide the Commission with the capacity and structure to move this project forward.

The Department notes that H.R. 1220 would authorize the Commission to accept funds, including funds from the Adams Memorial Foundation, to carry out its work.

The Department recommends an amendment to H.R. 1220 that would extend the authority of the Adams Memorial Commission to establish the memorial for a full seven-year time period. The bill authorizes the Commission for seven years but does not extend the Commission's authority to establish the memorial beyond the current expiration date of December 2, 2020. In order to give the Commission the greatest chance for success, the authority to establish the memorial should last seven years from the date of enactment of this Act, concurrent with time period the bill provides for the Commission.

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