

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. 3646, A BILL TO AUTHORIZE THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR TO ACCEPT CERTAIN PROPERTIES IN THE STATE OF MISSOURI.

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 S. 3646, a bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to accept certain properties in the State of Missouri.

The Department supports S. 3646 with an amendment described later in this statement.

S. 3646 would amend the legislation authorizing the establishment of Ste. Genevieve National Historical Park to authorize the acquisition of any property within the Ste. Genevieve National Historic District National Historic Landmark, regardless of whether the property was identified as nationally significant in the Ste. Genevieve Final Special Resource Study and Environmental Assessment of May 2016. S. 3646 would also amend the legislation authorizing the establishment of the Harry S. Truman National Historic Site to authorize the acquisition of certain lands owned by the city of Independence, Missouri, for inclusion in the historic site and use as a visitor center, if the Secretary determined the use appropriate.

Congress authorized the establishment of Ste. Genevieve National Historical Park in March 2018 as a unit of the National Park System to preserve, protect, and interpret the themes of French Settlement, vernacular architecture, and community form and farming on the frontier. The establishment was subject to the Secretary of the Interior's determination that sufficient land had been acquired to constitute a manageable unit and written agreements had been entered into providing that land owned by the State of Missouri, the city of Ste. Genevieve, or another entity within the National Historic District be managed consistent with the purposes of the Act. The National Park Service is in the process of meeting the legislative criteria for establishment of the new park. Land acquisitions from the State and other entities are being processed, and the NPS has signed agreements with six organizations, meeting the stipulations of the legislation.

The establishing legislation authorizes the National Park Service to acquire any land or interest in land located within the boundary of the National Historical Park or any property within the Ste. Genevieve National Historic District National Historic Landmark that was identified as nationally significant in the Ste. Genevieve Final Special Resource Study and Environmental Assessment of May 2016. The city of Ste. Genevieve and the National Park Service have identified a property that could be used as a visitor center for the park, but the current land acquisition authorities in the statute would not apply as the property is located within the boundary of the historic district – rather than the National Historical Park – and was not identified as nationally significant in the Special Resource Study. Rather, it is a more modern

property, which would better meet the needs of visitors as a starting point for their Ste. Genevieve experience.

Section 1(a) of S. 3646 would provide the National Park Service with the authority to acquire this property, but it would also provide the NPS with the authority to acquire any other non-historic property within the boundary of the historic district. The NPS supports the intent of this provision with regard to the property currently under consideration, but would note that it could create pressure for the NPS to acquire other, less suitable properties. Because the Department of the Interior is focusing resources on reducing the National Park Service's \$11.6 billion deferred maintenance backlog and addressing other critical national park needs, we recommend amending this provision to provide for more targeted acquisition authority. The NPS would be happy to work with the Committee on an amendment to achieve this objective.

S. 3646 would authorize the acquisition of a parcel of land in Independence, Missouri, for inclusion in the Harry S. Truman National Historic Site and use as a visitor center, if the Secretary determined the use appropriate. The current visitor center was not designed for this purpose, nor were other available properties near the park resources. The property identified in the proposed amendment is currently a green space, near the existing visitor center and centrally located in Independence that could be developed to meet the needs of the NPS and park visitors.

The Historic Site in Independence, Missouri, was designated as a unit of the National Park System by Congress in 1982. Since its initial passage, the law establishing the site has been amended several times to provide for the authority to acquire several properties related to the Truman family and story. Today, in addition to the Truman home, his residence from 1919 to 1972, the site has four other homes that were part of the family compound: his Uncle and Aunt Noland's home, the Wallace homes owned by Bess Truman's brothers, and the Truman farm home in Grandview, Missouri.

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