

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. 3659, A BILL TO AUTHORIZE THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR TO ANNUALLY DESIGNATE AT LEAST ONE CITY IN THE UNITED STATES AS AN “AMERICAN WORLD WAR II HERITAGE CITY”, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

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. 3659, a bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to annually designate at least one city in the United States as an “American World War II Heritage City”, and for other purposes.

The Department appreciates the desire of the bill’s sponsors to recognize localities that help preserve the history of the United States’ involvement in World War II, but does not support enactment of S. 3659. At a time when the Department is focusing resources on reducing the National Park Service’s \$11.6 billion deferred maintenance backlog and addressing other critical national park needs, it would be difficult to prioritize funding for a new program that the bill would require to commemorate a period in our nation’s history that the National Park Service (NPS) already commemorates in multiple ways.

S. 3659 would direct the Secretary of the Interior to establish and publicize a process by which a city may apply for designation as an American World War II Heritage City based on certain criteria outlined in the bill. At least one city in the states or territories of the United States would be designated annually. The Secretary would consult with the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution or the President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation on the selection. Criteria for designation would include contributions by a city to the World War II home-front war effort and achievements by a city to preserve the heritage and legacy of the city’s contributions to the war effort and to preserve World War II history.

The NPS currently preserves the history and tells the story of America’s efforts in World War II at many sites including: World War II Memorial, World War II Valor in the Pacific National Monument, Manzanar National Historic Site, Minidoka National Historic Site, Tule Lake Unit, Manhattan Project National Historical Park, Rosie the Riveter WWII Home Front National Historical Park, American Memorial Park, Aleutian WWII National Historic Site, Port Chicago Naval Museum, Tuskegee Airmen National Historic Sites, Honouliuli National Monument, Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism During World War II, as well as through many others. In addition to the stewardship of these historic sites, the NPS provides resources to communities nationwide through NPS’ cultural resource programs and grants. These NPS programs include the National Historic Landmarks and National Register programs, the Japanese American Confinement Sites program and grants, and educational outreach materials developed by the NPS. Adding a program to designate one city in each state or territory may not be the

most effective way for the NPS to expand its work in preserving, memorializing, and interpreting the significant American story of our efforts and involvement in World War II.

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