

**STATEMENT OF CHRISTINA GOLDFUSS, DEPUTY DIRECTOR,  
CONGRESSIONAL AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE,  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
NATIONAL PARKS, COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES,  
CONCERNING S. 2576, TO ESTABLISH THE MARITIME WASHINGTON  
NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.**

**July 23, 2014**

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Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to present the Department of the Interior's views on S. 2576, a bill to establish the Maritime Washington National Heritage Area.

The Department supports the objectives of S. 2576. The Maritime Washington National Heritage Area has been found to meet the National Park Service's interim criteria for designation as a National Heritage Area. However, the Department recommends that Congress pass program legislation that establishes criteria to evaluate potentially qualified National Heritage Areas and a process for the designation, funding, and administration of these areas before designating any additional new National Heritage Areas. The Department also recommends a technical amendment to provide for an official NPS map to accompany the legislation.

There are currently 49 designated national heritage areas, although there is no authority in law that guides their designation and administration as a national system. National heritage area program legislation would provide a much-needed framework for evaluation of proposed national heritage areas, guiding planning and management, clarifying roles and responsibilities, and standardizing timeframes and funding for designated areas.

S. 2576 would establish the Maritime Washington National Heritage Area to include Federal, State, local and tribal lands that allow public access and are at least partly located within one-quarter mile landward of the shoreline from Gray's Harbor to the Canadian border and extending through the City of Seattle to include Lake Union. This "Salt Water Coast" covers 3,000 linear miles of coastline.

The proposed local coordinating entity would be the Pacific Northwest Maritime Heritage Advisory Council operating under the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation.

*A Feasibility Study for a Washington State National Maritime Heritage Area* was completed and published by the Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation in April 2010. The NPS conducted a review of the study for consistency with the interim *National Heritage Area Feasibility Study Guidelines*. The review of this document and a subsequent revised Statement of Importance and boundary justification, submitted March 5, 2012, found that it meets these criteria. The Washington Trust for Historic Preservation was informed of this finding in a letter dated June 5, 2012.

The unique geography of the Puget Sound, northern coast, and Grays Harbor region reflects a maritime history both before and after our nation's borders were set. The steep terrain of glacier-

clad mountain ranges juxtaposed to saltwater shoreline with a temperate climate enabled native people build a complex culture around canoe routes and salmon cycles. By the late 18<sup>th</sup> century Spanish, English, and Russian explorers were mapping and naming places in the region in the name of science and the interest of colonial empire. After the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel was established as the nation's northern border in 1846, this new corner of the country entered a dramatic period of social, political and military development. The vast conifer forests were easily accessible for timber production and the coastal geography made possible its transport to the developing American west. The timber trade and the abundant marine resources - especially salmon - of the Strait of San Juan de Fuca, Puget Sound, and the Pacific Ocean, attracted American, European, and Pan-Asian settlers who provided the labor for thriving port economies such as Port Angeles, Port Townsend, and Port Gamble.

The proposed Maritime Washington National Heritage Area stretches from northern points of entry at Bellingham and Blaine south to the protected harbors of Aberdeen and Hoquiam. The focal point of the heritage area is the greater Puget Sound area, a system of interconnected marine waterways, harbors, bays, and inlets along the shores of the San Juan Archipelago and the many waterfront towns, cities, and ports that have grown up here over time. The naval facilities on Puget Sound have built and repaired vessels in their fleet for over a century. Today, the region still relies on these waterways to make up the largest marine highway system – its famous ferries – for day-to-day transportation.

The cultural landscape of the region tells the stories of a rich Native American civilization, development of the farthest territorial corner of the United States, of gold rushers and ship builders, and of a gateway to Alaska, Asia, and the seaports of the world. Traditional Native American sites, lumber towns, logging mills, salmon processing plants, historic ships, lighthouses, museums, and a host of other maritime-related objects, sites, and traditions relate these stories and make up the proposed Maritime Washington National Heritage Area. The designation would strengthen and encourage the partnership of organizations that have for two decades been committed to the recognition, preservation, and continued economic, recreational, and educational use of this landscape and its resources.

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