

**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. 3291, A BILL TO REAUTHORIZE THE NEW JERSEY COASTAL HERITAGE TRAIL ROUTE, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.**

**December 12, 2018**

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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. 3291, to reauthorize the New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail Route, and for other purposes.

The Department recognizes the accomplishments of the public-private partnership that has advanced the programs and initiatives of the New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail Route (Trail), but we do not support S. 3291. 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, we believe it would be unwise to revive a Federal funding authority for a program that the National Park Service has not been involved with for the last seven years.

S. 3291 would reauthorize the use of Federal funding and technical assistance for signage and planning for the Trail through September 30, 2025. It would also require the National Park Service to prepare a strategic plan for development and administration of the Trail. The funding authorization for the Trail expired on September 30, 2011. The National Park Service has not provided technical assistance to the Trail since that date.

The Trail is an auto-trail that extends along the eastern and southern coast of New Jersey for nearly 300 miles. It was established in 1988 to provide for public appreciation, education, understanding, and enjoyment of significant natural and cultural sites associated with the coastal area of the State of New Jersey. The Trail consists of five regions that define different aspects of coastal life: maritime history, coastal habitats, wildlife migration, historic settlements, and relaxation and inspiration. Notable sites include the Sandy Hook Lighthouse, the oldest operating lighthouse in the nation; Greenwich, the town where revolutionaries burned British tea in 1774; and the schooner A.J. Meerwald, New Jersey's official tall ship.

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