

**STATEMENT OF MICHAEL A. CALDWELL, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, PARK PLANNING, FACILITIES, AND LANDS, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SENATE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS CONCERNING S. 351, A BILL TO DESIGNATE 6 CREEKS IN THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA IN HONOR OF THE LIVES LOST IN A PLANE CRASH IN CARTERET COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA, ON FEBRUARY 13, 2022, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.**

**JUNE 21, 2023**

---

Chairman King, Ranking Member Daines, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the Department of the Interior's views on S. 351, a bill to designate 6 creeks in the State of North Carolina in honor of the lives lost in a plane crash in Carteret County, North Carolina, on February 13, 2022, and for other purposes.

On February 13th, 2022, a small plane with eight individuals on board, including four teenagers, crashed near Drum Inlet, off the coast of North Carolina and near Cape Lookout National Seashore. None of the individuals on board survived the crash. S. 351 would designate six creeks in that area for the following passengers: Noah Styron, age 15; Hunter Parks, age 45; Kole McInnis, age 15; Stephanie Fulcher, age 42; Jacob Taylor, age 16; and Daily Shepherd, age 15. These six creeks are located within or near Cape Lookout National Seashore (Seashore), but there is no mention of the Seashore in the legislation.

By policy, the National Park Service generally discourages the naming of park features except when there is a compelling justification—i.e., the association between the person and the park is of exceptional importance—and at least five years have elapsed since the death of the person. Some or all of the creeks proposed for designation are within the boundary of the Seashore. The Department has concerns about the appropriateness of memorializing victims of accidents by naming geographic features for them. We urge the Committee to consider the precedent that passing this bill might set.

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