

STATEMENT OF JOY BEASLEY, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FOR CULTURAL RESOURCES, PARTNERSHIPS AND SCIENCE, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SENATE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, CONCERNING LEGISLATION PERTAINING TO NATIONAL HERITAGE AREAS.

October 6, 2021

Chairman King, Ranking Member Daines, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the views of the Department of the Interior on S. 1942, to authorize a National Heritage Area Program; on five bills that would establish new national heritage areas, S. 511, S. 825, S. 1643, S. 2296, and S. 2441; and on sixteen bills that would extend authorities for several existing national heritage areas, S. 336, S. 378, S. 635, S. 654, S. 787, S. 972, S. 990, S. 1004, S. 1224, S. 1258, S. 1318, S. 1329, S. 1954, S. 2482, S. 2648, and S. 2763.

National Heritage Area Program Legislation

The Department recognizes that every one of the 55 national heritage areas that have been established by Congress serves an important role in preserving, interpreting, and promoting the unique natural and cultural characteristics of the area it encompasses. We support establishing a statutory framework for the National Park Service's (NPS) role in administering the national heritage area program, as S. 1942 would do, but would like to work with the sponsors and the Committee on revisions to the bill.

National heritage areas foster stewardship of our nation's heritage without creating new park units. Rather than providing direct management, the NPS partners with national heritage area coordinating entities to provide technical and financial assistance. National heritage areas match and leverage federal funds appropriated by Congress to carry out heritage projects and programs in collaboration with local partners, expanding the impact of the federal dollars invested. National heritage area designation does not change land ownership or impose land use controls on any lands (private or otherwise) within the authorized boundary that constitutes a heritage area. Through public-private partnerships, national heritage areas support historic preservation, natural resource conservation, recreation, heritage tourism, and educational projects.

The first national heritage area was designated 37 years ago, and since that time, Congress has established a total of 55 national heritage areas in 34 states. Based on the number of national heritage area proposals that have been introduced in Congress, interest in creating new heritage areas remains high. Each heritage area is designated in perpetuity, but in most cases, Congress has included a federal funding sunset date that is 15 years after the date of enactment, and an initial funding limit of \$10 million. Congress has typically extended the authorization of funding for heritage areas once a sunset date or funding limit has been reached. This year, 30 of the 55 national heritage areas require an extension of their authorizations of funding in order to be eligible to receive funds in FY 2022.

The NPS carries out its role in national heritage area activities through its Heritage Partnership Program. This program's responsibilities include evaluating heritage area feasibility studies;

evaluating and approving national heritage area management plans; performing evaluations of heritage areas after they have been established for several years; and overseeing the use of funding that Congress provides to individual heritage areas through the NPS. The program provides a significant amount of technical support and assistance on an ongoing basis to the existing national heritage areas and to organizations interested in pursuing national heritage area designation. The program's authority is derived from the provisions included in the various laws that established the 55 designated national heritage areas.

S. 1942 would recognize national heritage areas as a system, rather than as individual entities, and would provide clear statutory authority for the NPS to administer the national heritage area program. The bill would specify the authorities and responsibilities of the Secretary of the Interior and would provide uniform standards for conducting feasibility studies, approving management plans, and conducting evaluations. Additionally, it would authorize appropriations of up to \$1,000,000 per year for each individual national heritage area, regardless of an individual heritage area's sunset date or spending cap under current law.

The Department supports enacting the bill's provisions for the NPS to carry out its role in the operation of heritage area activities, which would provide authority for the NPS's important ongoing responsibilities for national heritage areas. However, we recommend clarifying the bill's provisions for conducting feasibility studies, approving management plans, conducting evaluations, and carrying out other activities as they apply to existing laws that established national heritage areas or authorized feasibility studies. Currently, it is unclear whether these provisions would apply to existing national heritage areas and authorized studies, or only to national heritage areas designated and feasibility studies authorized after the enactment of this act.

Designation of New National Heritage Areas

Five bills would establish new national heritage areas, S. 511, S. 825, S. 1643, S. 2441, and S. 2296. Each one of the proposed areas has unique characteristics that have contributed to the rich tapestry of American history and culture. However, only two, so far, have been found to meet the NPS's criteria for establishment of a national heritage area: S. 2296, which would designate the Northern Neck National Heritage Area, and S. 2441, which would designate the Southern Campaign of the Revolution National Heritage Corridor. The Department supports these two bills and recommends amendments as described below. While they may have merit, the Department recommends Congress consider deferring action on the other three bills while the NPS works with the sponsoring organizations to ensure their feasibility studies meet the criteria for designation. Without such studies, the NPS is not able to assess whether the necessary conditions exist to form and implement national heritage areas that will be successful in preserving and interpreting the resources associated with the history and culture of each of these areas. Studies may be conducted by the NPS through congressional authorization, or by an entity that submits a study to the NPS for a determination, provided that the study demonstrates that the area meets the NPS criteria.

S. 2296 would establish the Northern Neck National Heritage Area, which would include land in King George, Lancaster, Northumberland, Richmond, and Westmoreland Counties in Virginia. S. 2296 generally follows the recommendations of the national heritage feasibility study that was

conducted by the NPS pursuant to P.L. 111-11 and transmitted to Congress in 2020. The Department recommends the development of a legislative map based on the one referenced in the bill.

S. 2441 would establish the Southern Campaign of the Revolution National Heritage Corridor for the purpose of preserving, promoting, and interpreting resources related to the American Revolutionary War in the Carolinas. S. 2441 generally follows the recommendations of the national heritage area feasibility study that was conducted by the NPS pursuant to P.L. 109-338 and transmitted to Congress in 2015. The Department recommends conforming the language used in S. 2441 to that typically used in other national heritage area legislation in areas where S. 2441 differs, including adding a requirement for non-federal cost sharing. We also recommend the development of a legislative map based on the one referenced in the bill.

S. 511 would establish the Bronzeville-Black Metropolis National Heritage Area, for the purpose of interpreting the distinctive landscape, history, and culture of Chicago's Black Metropolis and the story of the Great Migration. The NPS has been working with the sponsoring organization on its draft feasibility study and would like to continue to do so to ensure that the study meets the NPS criteria, which will help set the potential national heritage area up for success. If the Committee moves forward with the legislation, the Department recommends conforming the language used in S. 511 to that typically used in other national heritage area legislation in areas where S. 511 differs. We also recommend the development of a legislative map to reference in the bill.

S. 825 would establish the Southern Maryland National Heritage Area, an area that would include portions of St. Mary's, Calvert, Charles, and Prince George's counties. A feasibility study by a local group is still in progress and has not been completed. If the Committee moves forward with the legislation, the Department recommends conforming the language used in S. 825 to that typically used in other national heritage area legislation in areas where S. 825 differs. We also recommend the development of a legislative map to reference in the bill.

S. 1643 would establish the Alabama Black Belt National Heritage Area for the purpose of conserving and interpreting sites and stories central to the American Civil Rights movement within 19 counties in the State of Alabama. The NPS has been working with the sponsoring organization on its draft feasibility study and would like to continue to do so to ensure that the study meets the NPS criteria, which will help set the potential national heritage area up for success. If the Committee moves forward with the legislation, the Department recommends conforming the language used in S. 1643 to that typically used in other national heritage area legislation in areas where S. 1643 differs. We also recommend the development of a legislative map to reference in the bill.

Extension of Authorities for National Heritage Areas

Sixteen bills on the agenda would extend existing authorities for 23 national heritage areas, S. 336, S. 378, S. 635, S. 654, S. 787, S. 972, S. 990, S. 1004, S. 1224, S. 1258, S. 1318, S. 1329, S. 1954, S. 2482, S. 2648, and S. 2763. The Department supports these bills' provisions for extension of federal funding and recommends Congress provide for an ongoing authorization of funding for national heritage areas, subject to appropriations. If ongoing authorization of federal

funding is not enacted, the Department recommends amending the termination date in S. 1224 from fiscal year 2031 to fiscal year 2036 to align with the other extension bills. We also recommend standardizing the approach to federal funding limitations as only some of the bills eliminate a funding limitation. The Department seeks consistent cost-share requirements for national heritage areas as part of this public-private partnership program and recommends that the nonfederal match requirement in S. 2482 not be reduced.

The sixteen bills are:

- S. 336, which would extend the authorization of Ohio & Erie National Heritage Canalway to receive federal funding through fiscal year 2036 and would raise the federal funding limitation for the area to \$30,000,000.
- S. 378, which would extend the authorization of the Steel Industry American Heritage Area (Rivers of Steel NHA), the Lackawanna Valley National Heritage Area, the Schuylkill River Valley National Heritage Area, and the Oil Region National Heritage Area to receive federal funding through fiscal year 2036 and would eliminate the federal funding limitation for each area. The bill would also extend the authorization of the Delaware & Lehigh National Heritage Area to received federal funding through fiscal year 2036.
- S. 635, which would extend the authorization of The Last Green Valley National Heritage Corridor and the Upper Housatonic Valley National Heritage Area to receive federal funding through fiscal year 2036 and would eliminate the federal funding limitation for each area.
- S. 654, which would extend the authorization of the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area to receive federal funding through fiscal year 2036 and would eliminate the federal funding limitation for the area.
- S. 787, which would extend the authorization of the Atchafalaya National Heritage Area to receive federal funding through fiscal year 2036.
- S. 972, which would extend the authorization of the Essex National Heritage Area to receive federal funding through fiscal year 2036 and would eliminate the federal funding limitation for the area.
- S. 990, which would extend the authorization of the Northern Rio Grande National Heritage Area to receive federal funding through fiscal year 2036.
- S. 1004, which would extend the authorization of the Mormon Pioneer National Heritage Area and the Great Basin National Heritage Area to receive federal funding through fiscal year 2036. The bill would also rename the Great Basin Heritage Route as the Great Basin Heritage Area and the Great Basin Heritage Route Partnership as the Great Basin Heritage Area Partnership.
- S. 1224, would extend the authorization of the Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area to receive federal funding through fiscal year 2031 and would raise the federal funding limitation for the area to \$23,000,000. The bill would also rename the America's Agricultural Heritage Partnership as the Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area.
- S. 1258, would extend the authorization of the National Coal Heritage Area and Wheeling National Heritage Area to receive federal funding through fiscal year 2036. The bill would also extend the deadline from 3 years to 4 years for national heritage areas

established by the John D. Dingell Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act (P.L. 116-9) to submit their management plans to the Secretary of the Interior.

- S. 1318, would extend the authorization of the Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area to receive federal funding through fiscal year 2036.
- S. 1329, would extend the authorization of the National Aviation Heritage Area to receive federal funding through fiscal year 2036.
- S. 1954, would extend the authorization of the John H. Chafee Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor to receive federal funding through fiscal year 2036.
- S. 2482, would extend the authorization of the Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership to receive federal funding through fiscal year 2036 and would reduce the nonfederal cost-share amount from 50 percent to 25 percent.
- S. 2648, would extend the authorization of the Kenai Mountains-Turnagain Arm National Heritage Area to receive federal funding through fiscal year 2036 and would eliminate the federal funding limitation for the area.
- S. 2763, would extend the authorization of the Motor Cities National Heritage Area to receive federal funding through fiscal year 2036 and would raise the federal funding limitation for the area to \$23,250,000. Additionally, the bill would suspend the nonfederal match requirement for fiscal years 2022 and 2023 due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Regarding the bills described in this statement for which the Department recommends amendments, we would be pleased to work with the bill sponsors and the Committee to draft those amendments.

Chairman King, Ranking Member Daines, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I would be happy to answer any questions you or other members of the Subcommittee may have.

STATEMENT OF JOY BEASLEY, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FOR CULTURAL RESOURCES, PARTNERSHIPS AND SCIENCE, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SENATE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, CONCERNING S. 1112, A BILL TO DESIGNATE THE CHISHOLM NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL AND THE WESTERN NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL AS PART OF THE NATIONAL TRAILS SYSTEM, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

October 6, 2021

Chairman King, Ranking Member Daines, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the views of the Department of the Interior (Department) on S. 1112, a bill to amend the National Trails System Act to designate the Chisholm National Historic Trail and the Western National Historic Trail, and for other purposes.

The Department supports S. 1112 and the designation of the Chisholm National Historic Trail and Western National Historic Trail with technical amendments. The Department recognizes the important contribution to America's ranching story that is represented by the Chisholm National Historic Trail and the Western National Historic Trail. The development and intensive use of these trails played an important role in the economic recovery of Texas and other western States following the Civil War.

S. 1112 would designate the Chisholm National Historic Trail and the Western National Historic Trail as part of the National Trails System. The bill would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to administer the trails located on Federal land as a single administrative unit, and to administer any portion of the trails located on non-Federal land only with the consent of the owner.

In 2009, Congress directed the National Park Service (NPS) to conduct a national historic trail feasibility study of the trails in accordance with the National Trails System Act and associated criteria. The NPS completed civic engagement and public review stages of the Chisholm and Great Western Historic Trails Feasibility Study/Environmental Assessment in January 2015 and noted public support. Also, during the study in 2012, the National Park System Advisory Board concurred that the trail routes and themes were historically and nationally significant. The final feasibility study was transmitted to Congress in May 2019 and found the trails to be eligible for designation to the National Trails System.

The trails include approximately 2,548 miles of routes passing through the States of Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, and Nebraska as generally depicted on the maps numbered as 1 through 6 in the national trail feasibility study. If designated, and subject to the availability of appropriations, the federal national trail administrator would develop a comprehensive plan for both trails to guide administration, management, and coordination among partners in accordance with the National Trails System Act. The national trail feasibility study recommends that the NPS serve as the federal national trail administrator.

If the Committee decides to act on this legislation, we would like to work with you on technical amendments to S. 1112.

Chairman King, Ranking Member Daines, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I would be happy to answer any questions you or other members of the Subcommittee may have.

STATEMENT OF JOY BEASLEY, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FOR CULTURAL RESOURCES, PARTNERSHIPS AND SCIENCE, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SENATE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, CONCERNING H.R. 2497 AND S. 1284, BILLS TO ESTABLISH THE AMACHE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE IN THE STATE OF COLORADO AS A UNIT OF THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

October 6, 2021

Chairman King, Ranking Member Daines, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the views of the Department of the Interior (Department) on H.R. 2497 and S. 1284, bills to establish the Amache National Historic Site in the State of Colorado as a unit of the National Park System, and for other purposes.

The Department recognizes the important contribution to America's story that is represented by the site known as Amache, where Japanese Americans were incarcerated during World War II. Congress authorized the Amache Special Resource Study as part of the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act (P.L. 116-9), enacted on March 12, 2019. The NPS completed civic engagement in May 2021 and the public comment period for the Special Resource Study closed on June 30, 2021. The NPS is working closely with both internal and external subject matter experts to ensure the study captures the complexities and nuances of the history of Japanese American WWII incarceration. After reviewing all comments, the NPS will draft its assessment of whether the site meets the congressionally established criteria for inclusion in the National Park System, and the Department will transmit the study and recommendations to Congress.

H.R. 2497 and S. 1284 would establish the Amache National Historic Site as a unit of the National Park System when the Secretary of the Interior acquires sufficient land within the boundary of the site to constitute a manageable unit. The boundaries of the unit would be determined by a map that would be developed after enactment of the bill. The NPS would be required to develop a management plan for the site that does not interfere with existing use of existing facilities at the site. The bill would also allow for the establishment of administrative, visitor service, and curatorial facilities outside the boundaries of the site and for entering into agreements with other public and private entities to establish those facilities and for other purposes.

Originally known as the Granada Relocation Center, Amache was one of ten incarceration sites established by the War Relocation Authority during World War II to forcibly remove, illegally detain, and incarcerate U.S. citizens and legal residents of Japanese ancestry from the West Coast of the United States under the terms of Executive Order 9066. Amache was constructed on approximately 10,000 acres of land and held about 10,000 people of Japanese descent between 1942 and 1945. It is located approximately one mile from the Town of Granada in southeastern Colorado. Amache was designated by the Secretary of the Interior as a National Historic Landmark on February 10, 2006.

The site is currently owned by the Town of Granada and maintained by the Amache Preservation Society. At the site, visitors can observe a historic cemetery, a monument, concrete building foundations, a road network, and other elements of the historic landscape that remain intact. Recent efforts to preserve Amache have led to the restoration of the original water tower, the reconstruction of a guard tower and residential barracks, and the current rehabilitation of a historic recreation hall. The NPS has provided technical and financial assistance for preservation and interpretation of the site through the Japanese American Confinement Sites Grant Program.

We appreciate the changes the House made to H.R. 2497 after the bill's introduction. If the Committee decides to act on this legislation, we would like S.1284 to reflect the same amendments that were made to H.R. 2497.

Chairman King, Ranking Member Daines, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I would be happy to answer any questions you or other members of the Subcommittee may have.

STATEMENT OF JOY BEASLEY, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FOR CULTURAL RESOURCES, PARTNERSHIPS AND SCIENCE, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SENATE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, CONCERNING S. 1620, A BILL TO DIRECT THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR TO CONVEY TO THE CITY OF EUNICE, LOUISIANA, CERTAIN FEDERAL LAND IN THE STATE OF LOUISIANA, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

OCTOBER 6, 2021

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. 1620, a bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior to convey to the city of Eunice, Louisiana, certain Federal land in the state of Louisiana, and for other purposes.

The Department supports S. 1620.

S. 1620 would direct the Secretary of the Interior to convey to the city of Eunice, Louisiana, all right, title, and interest to the parcels of land generally depicted as “Proposed Disposal Area” on the map referenced in the legislation and comprised of a National Park Service (NPS) owned annex to a city owned building, the Liberty Theater. Ownership of the annex would be conveyed to the City and the NPS would relinquish any interest. The boundary of Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve would be revised to exclude the annex.

Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve (park) was established to preserve significant examples of the rich natural and cultural resources of Louisiana's Mississippi Delta region. The park consists of six physically separate sites. The sites include cultural centers in Lafayette, Thibodaux, and Eunice; the Chalmette Battlefield; Barataria Preserve; and the park's headquarters and visitor center located in New Orleans' French Quarter. The Lafayette, Thibodaux, and Eunice cultural centers preserve and interpret examples of the Acadian culture of the area. The Chalmette Battlefield and National Cemetery commemorate the site of the 1815 Battle of New Orleans. The Barataria Preserve interprets the culture of those who settled the area and the unique ecosystem that sustained them, and preserves a representative example of the Delta's environment, containing natural levee forests, bayous, swamps and marshes.

As the park's mission and management responsibilities have grown in scope and size, the NPS has endeavored to work with local communities and identify opportunities to share resources and responsibilities while serving the mission of the agency. In some instances, arrangements that were useful in the past have outgrown their utility and the related resources could better be directed elsewhere in the park.

Public Law 100-250, signed into law in 1988, established the Prairie Acadian Cultural Center (PACC) in Eunice as a part of Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve. The Liberty Theater, a vaudeville and movie and performance venue constructed in 1924, is next door to the PACC. In 1989, the park restored and rehabilitated the theater, constructed an adjoining annex

STATEMENT OF JOY BEASLEY, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FOR CULTURAL RESOURCES, PARTNERSHIPS AND SCIENCE, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SENATE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, CONCERNING S. 2438, A BILL TO MODIFY THE BOUNDARY OF THE CANE RIVER CREOLE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK IN THE STATE OF LOUISIANA, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

OCTOBER 6, 2021

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. 2438, a bill to modify the boundary of the Cane River Creole National Historical Park in the State of Louisiana, and for other purposes.

The Department supports S. 2438 with technical amendments.

S. 2438 would expand the legislative boundary of the Magnolia Plantation Unit of Cane River Creole National Historical Park in Louisiana by approximately 46.1 acres. The land that would be added to the boundary is part of the historic Magnolia Plantation, which is a National Historic Landmark and is currently owned by the descendants of the original plantation owners. The property includes the main house, seven outbuildings, and several cultural landscape features and archeological sites. At present, the National Park Service owns a smaller portion of Magnolia Plantation, maintaining 18-acres with approximately 20 historic structures.

Cane River Creole National Historical Park was established by Public Law 103-499 in order to “recognize the importance of the Cane River Creole culture as a nationally significance element of the cultural heritage of the United States” and to commemorate the blending of Native American, French, Spanish, and African cultures in the Cane River region that occurred from 1714 to present. Today, Cane River Creole National Historical Park protects two of the most intact Creole cotton plantations in the United States—Oakland Plantation and portions of Magnolia Plantation. Magnolia Plantation was the largest plantation in Natchitoches Parish in the mid-1800s, both in terms of land and in terms of enslaved peoples. It has direct ties to African American history from the late 1700s to 1970s, from the period of enslavement, to the Civil War, Reconstruction, sharecropping and tenant farming of the mid-20th century. The plantation is also a recognized Bicentennial Farm, owned by descendants of the same family for over 200 years.

When Cane River Creole National Historical Park was established in 1994, the Magnolia Plantation core was divided in half: half was acquired by the National Park Service, and the other half remained in private ownership. However, at the time it was noted that important plantation resources existed outside the current 18-acre park boundary. This legislation would allow the National Park Service to acquire and preserve the privately-owned half of the historic plantation core, fulfilling the park’s mission to protect Magnolia Plantation in its entirety. Doing so would allow the National Park Service to tell the complete story of all people, of French and African

descent, free and enslaved, at Magnolia Plantation. Enlargement of the park to include the entire Magnolia Plantation core is welcomed as an opportunity to present this important place as a whole. This change in land administration is supported locally among city, county, and state officials, as well as the landowners and family descendants.

While the Department supports S. 2438, we recommend amending the legislation to include a revised legislative map. We would be pleased to provide a legislative map and recommended amendments for these purposes.

Chairman King, Ranking Member Daines, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I would be happy to answer any questions you or other Members may have.

for public health, safety and accessibility and installed a master HVAC system for the theater, annex and nearby PACC.

The master HVAC system is now antiquated and beyond repair and must be replaced. The park plans to replace the system in the PACC and the city of Eunice plans to install a new HVAC system in the theater. Transferring ownership of the Liberty Theater annex to the city of Eunice would allow the city greater flexibility and autonomy in determining the appropriate approach to the theater's HVAC needs while providing significant cost savings to the NPS and clarifying management responsibilities for both parties. This change in ownership is supported locally by city officials.

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

DRAFT STATEMENT OF JOY BEASLEY, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FOR CULTURAL RESOURCES, PARTNERSHIPS AND SCIENCE, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SENATE ENERGY & NATURAL RESOURCES SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS CONCERNING S. 2158 TO EXTEND THE AUTHORIZATION FOR THE CAPE COD NATIONAL SEASHORE ADVISORY COMMISSION.

October 6, 2021

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. 2158 to extend the authorization for the Cape Cod National Seashore Advisory Commission (Commission).

The Department supports S. 2158 with one recommended technical change.

The bill would reauthorize the Commission until September 26, 2029, retroactive to September 26, 2018, the date that the Commission's authority to operate expired. The retroactive extension included in the bill would enable the Commission to function with the same charter it had previously. There would be no new administrative costs associated with reauthorization of the Commission.

The Commission was originally authorized in 1961 as a part of Public Law 87-126, Cape Cod National Seashore's enabling legislation, and began operation in 1966. It has been legislatively and administratively reestablished and amended several times. The Commission was last extended for a ten-year period by Public Law 111-11 in 2009.

The Commission is an exceptional example within the National Park System of a partner in cooperative land stewardship. Its purpose is to advise park management on questions relating to municipal and private land ownership and occupancy inside the seashore, and on the management of recreational activities. Membership consists of one representative from each of the six Lower Cape towns, two from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, one from Barnstable County, and one selected by the Secretary of the Interior.

The seashore, located in eastern Massachusetts, involves a unique pattern of land ownership and management. The six Lower Cape towns, from whose lands the Cape Cod National Seashore was carved, retain ownership of numerous parcels within the park including ponds, beaches, parking lots and roads. In addition, more than 600 parcels inside the park are privately owned. Under a unique landowner arrangement, sometimes referred to as the 'Cape Cod Model,' many of these parcels are expected to remain in private hands.

Activities on these lands can have profound effects on protected resources within the seashore, creating a need for constructive and productive dialogue among landowners and park managers. The multiplicity of interests to which the park superintendent must respond, requires effective public and community involvement that the Commission effectively provides.

Before its authority to operate expired on September 26, 2018, the Commission was an asset that enhanced and encouraged communication between park managers and local communities and

had established an excellent reputation as a facilitator of vital community dialogue. Frequent use of subcommittees allows local opinion leaders to remain involved. At the same time, it permitted numerous parties to have direct access to park management through consultation.

In its recent past, the Commission has addressed such contentious issues as: shore bird management, kite boarding, the impacts of climate change on park infrastructure, and the expiration of several reservations of use and occupancy. Passage of this bill would enable the Commission to continue this important role.

As mentioned above, the Department supports S. 2158 with one recommended technical change to the Commission's statutory role. The law that established the Commission [16 U.S.C. 459b-7(g)] states that no permit for the commercial or industrial use of property located within the seashore shall be issued, nor shall any public use area for recreational activity be established within the seashore, without the advice of the Commission, if such advice is submitted within a reasonable time after it is sought. We recommend this provision be struck as it is unusual for an advisory commission to have this kind of statutory role in park management decisions.

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

STATEMENT OF JOY BEASLEY, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FOR CULTURAL RESOURCES, PARTNERSHIPS AND SCIENCE, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SENATE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, CONCERNING S. 2490 A BILL TO ESTABLISH THE BLACKWELL SCHOOL NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE IN MARFA, TEXAS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

October 6, 2021

Chairman King, Ranking Member Daines, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the views of the Department of the Interior (Department) on S. 2490 to establish the Blackwell School National Historic Site in Marfa, Texas, and for other purposes.

S. 2490 would establish Blackwell School National Historic Site as a unit of the National Park System when the Secretary of the Interior enters into a written agreement with the Marfa Unified School District for donation or co-management of the site and acquires sufficient lands within the boundaries of the national historic site to constitute a manageable unit. The NPS would be required to develop a management plan for the site no later than 3 years after the date on which funds are first made available for this purpose. The bill also directs the Secretary of the Interior to enter into cooperative agreements with the Blackwell School Alliance (and other partners) for interpretive and educational programming, technical assistance, and rehabilitation for the site.

Through the mid-twentieth century, segregation of school children in Texas was a common practice, although Texas had no official state law mandating this segregation. The Blackwell School was the only public educational institution for Hispanic children in Marfa, Texas, from 1909 to 1965. Marfa retains a rich Hispanic cultural presence, and the Blackwell School remains an important tangible link for the community as well as a historical reminder of our nation's segregated past. The Blackwell School is listed in the National Register of Historic Places for its local historical significance.

The National Park Service (NPS) deeply understands that education is important to a democratic society, and recognizes the important contribution to America's story that is represented by places, such as the Blackwell School, where Hispanic students were segregated for their education. The NPS shares similar chapters in our nation's history at other locations, including Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site and Little Rock High Central High School National Historic Site. Education is one of the chapters in America's story that is underrepresented in the National Park System. Establishing a unit of the National Park System could be one way to preserve and interpret the resources and related stories of Blackwell School.

The NPS has not had the opportunity to evaluate the Blackwell School as a potential unit of the National Park System. Amending the bill to provide for a special resource study of the Blackwell School, rather than the establishment of a new unit, would enable the NPS to better understand this story in the national context and work with the public, the local community, and other stakeholders to gather information regarding both the school's history as well as the historic preservation and management needs of the site. We would be happy to provide suggested language for such an amendment. If the Committee decides to move forward on this bill without

a study, the Department would appreciate the opportunity to provide technical amendments to the bill.

Chairman King, Ranking Member Daines, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I would be happy to answer any questions you or other members of the Subcommittee may have.

STATEMENT OF JOY BEASLEY, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FOR CULTURAL RESOURCES, PARTNERSHIPS AND SCIENCE, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SENATE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS CONCERNING S. 2580, A BILL TO DIRECT THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR AND THE SECRETARY OF AGRICULTURE TO MAKE FREE NATIONAL PARKS AND FEDERAL RECREATION LANDS PASSES AVAILABLE TO MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

October 6, 2021

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. 2580, a bill to direct the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to make free National Parks and Federal Recreation Lands Passes available to Members of the Armed Forces, and for other purposes.

The Department supports S. 2580 with technical amendments. S. 2580 would provide statutory certainty and administrative efficiency for the recreation passes that Federal land management agencies currently offer to active-duty U.S. military service members and their families, veterans, and Gold Star Family members. These recreation passes provide a tangible way to recognize the service and sacrifice of members of the armed forces and their families.

S. 2580 would amend the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA) to require the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture to offer no-cost annual passes to active-duty military members and their dependents and no-cost lifetime passes to veterans and members of Gold Star Families. All three of these groups are currently eligible for free annual recreation passes. However, only the Gold Star Family members are eligible for passes by law; active-duty military members and their dependents, and veterans, are eligible for free annual passes through administrative decisions. These groups are eligible for no cost annual passes, not lifetime passes.

The Department believes that providing for these passes by law will provide certainty about the availability of these passes in the future. We also believe that it is appropriate to convert the current veterans annual pass, and the Gold Star Family annual pass, to lifetime passes, as that will save administrative costs for the agencies and reduce the time and effort of renewing passes for the veterans and Gold Star Family members themselves.

FLREA, enacted in 2004, authorizes the National Park Service (NPS), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) to collect and retain revenue and requires that fee revenue be used to enhance the visitor experience. At least 80 percent of the money stays in the park or recreation site where it is collected.

As a part of FLREA, Congress established the multi-agency America the Beautiful – The National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass Program (Interagency Pass Program) to cover entrance fees for the NPS and FWS and standard amenity recreation fees for the BLM, USFS, and BOR. The Interagency Pass Program began in 2007 and includes an annual pass for

\$80, a \$10 lifetime pass (later changed to \$80) for those age 62 years or older (Lifetime Senior Pass), and a free lifetime pass for persons with permanent disabilities (Access Pass), which has always included disabled veterans.

Public Law 113-121, enacted in 2014, authorizes the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to also participate in the Interagency Pass Program. In 2019, these six agencies sold an estimated three million passes. Revenue from the sale of the passes—which totaled nearly \$95 million in 2019—is a significant source of supplemental funding that enhances our efforts to address the maintenance backlog at our national parks, better manage other federal lands, and respond quickly to changes in visitation levels and service requirements.

While the Department supports enacting S. 2580, we are mindful about the impact that free Federal recreation passes will have on recreation fee revenues and encourage Congress to carefully consider the need for adequate resources so that members of the Armed Forces and all Americans can enjoy their public lands. The current Gold Star Families pass and the veterans pass, authorized by Secretarial Orders in October 2020, have been available for a year, during a period when many national parks and other public lands facilities experienced reduced visitation due to the pandemic. We do not yet have information comparing fee revenue in the years before and after these two passes were made available. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss with the Committee ways we can ensure that we have access to adequate revenue to benefit visitors to our parks and public lands, as Congress intended.

We also want to note that FLREA is not a permanent program. Since the 10-year initial authorization for the program expired in 2013, Congress has extended the authority for the program in one- or two-year increments in appropriations bills. If the authority for FLREA were to expire, so too would the authority for no-cost recreation passes.

The Department agrees that members of the Armed Forces, veterans, and Gold Star Families should have free access to Federal recreational lands. The Department supports the continuation and codification of providing a free annual pass for Active-Duty Military members and a free lifetime pass for Gold Star Families. We look forward to working with the Committee and sponsor alongside our partner agencies to provide input into the language of the bill to clarify and enhance its implementation.

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