

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. 2784, A BILL TO AMEND THE DAYTON AVIATION HERITAGE PRESERVATION ACT OF 1992 TO ADJUST THE BOUNDARY OF DAYTON AVIATION HERITAGE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK.

May 15, 2024

Chairman King, Ranking Member Daines, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the views of the U.S. Department of the Interior on S. 2784, a bill to amend the Dayton Aviation Heritage Preservation Act of 1992 to adjust the boundary of Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park.

The Department supports this legislation with a technical amendment.

S. 2784 amends Section 101 of the Dayton Aviation Heritage Preservation Act of 1992 to expand Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park's boundary to include one acre of land. This addition of land contains a parking area that is in need of upgrade and maintenance so that it can safely service the headquarters and one of the park's two visitor centers.

Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park was authorized through the Dayton Aviation Heritage Preservation Act of 1992 and was established to honor the lives and achievements of aviation pioneers Wilbur and Orville Wright and of the poet and author Paul Laurence Dunbar. The park's six sites offer visitors the opportunity to experience the historically refurbished Wright brothers' printing office, walk through an original Wright brothers' bicycle shop, see the Wright brothers' third airplane, follow Wilbur and Orville's footsteps at the Huffman Prairie Flying Field, visit Hawthorn Hill (the Wrights' mansion), and experience Paul Laurence Dunbar's last home.

In addition to these historic places, the park manages three visitor centers, one of which would directly benefit from this legislation. By adding the parking lot inside the boundary, National Park Service (NPS) and partner maintenance activities would ensure that visitors to the Wright-Dunbar Interpretive Center enjoy a safe, accessible, and well-maintained parking facility.

Legislation is required for the inclusion of the one-acre lot within the boundary because the park does not have authority to acquire property beyond its legislated boundaries. As a partnership park with assets owned by private and government partners, it has limited access to the minor boundary authorities commonly provided under the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act. By bringing the land inside the boundary of the park, the National Park Service will be able to use its already established partnership authorities to cover the cost of facility management and maintenance.

The Department notes that the map referenced in the legislation as “‘Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park Proposed Boundary Addition’ and dated February 2023”, is not a National Park Service legislative map. We recommend a technical amendment that replaces this map with a NPS-produced legislative map with a legislative map number. We are happy to work with the Subcommittee on the technical amendment and the legislative map.

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