

**STATEMENT OF CHRISTINA GOLDFUSS, DEPUTY DIRECTOR,
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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE ON
NATIONAL PARKS, COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES,
CONCERNING S. 1718, A BILL TO MODIFY THE BOUNDARY OF PETERSBURG
NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD IN THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA, AND FOR
OTHER PURPOSES.**

July 23, 2014

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the views of the Department of the Interior on S. 1718, a bill to modify the boundary of Petersburg National Battlefield in the Commonwealth of Virginia, and for other purposes.

The Department supports S. 1718.

S. 1718 would authorize two modifications to the boundary of Petersburg National Battlefield. First, the bill would expand the currently authorized boundary of Petersburg National Battlefield by an additional 7,238 acres. The boundary expansion proposal results from an analysis of “core battlefields” and a subsequent boundary adjustment study conducted as part of Petersburg National Battlefield’s General Management Plan completed in 2005. Second, the bill would effect a land exchange between the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of the Army involving approximately one acre under the each Department’s administrative jurisdiction.

The City of Petersburg lies in the corridor of intensive growth from Washington, D.C., to south of Richmond, Virginia. The region surrounding Petersburg National Battlefield has been and is currently experiencing significant development pressures impacting areas immediately adjacent to the park and unprotected battlefield sites. This development not only threatens park resources and public enjoyment, but also the core portions of the battlefields.

The park commemorates the Petersburg Campaign, the longest sustained combative military front on American soil, in both time and distance. When Congress created the park in 1926, only a fraction of the battlefield acreage associated with the 26 major battles of the Petersburg Campaign was included in the original boundary. The additional battlefields proposed to be added to the park by S. 1718 will allow the public to better understand the size, complexity, and duration of the 9½ month Petersburg Campaign and siege while offering protection to existing park resources.

In January 2002, in response to significant development pressures in the region surrounding the park and as part of its General Management Plan process, Petersburg National Battlefield undertook a detailed assessment of battlefields in the Petersburg Campaign cited in the Civil War Sites Advisory Commission (CWSAC) report of 1993 entitled “Report on the Nation’s Civil War Battlefields.” The CWSAC report identified 100,000 acres of the Petersburg battlefields as “core

battlefields” encompassing all of the critical phases defined for a battle. Of the 100,000 acres cited, 23,000 acres were determined to retain historic integrity.

During its more detailed analyses of the 23,000 acres, the park concentrated on those portions of the battlefields that were south of the Appomattox River and directly associated with the siege or defense of Petersburg, and that were identified as Class A (decisive) and Class B (major) by the CWSAC. Additionally, the park used historical maps and documentation to further refine the acreage to that constituting the portion of the battlefield on which both armies were engaged directly and that had a bearing on the outcome for each battle. Park staff further analyzed the integrity of these areas and their potential for public access and interpretation. The analyses found that 7,238 acres met the criteria for integrity and interpretability.

The estimated time period for acquisition of the 7,238 acres of these nationally significant lands is 15-20 years. Virtually all of the land subject to the boundary adjustment represents a mixture of private and non-profit, organization-owned parcels. Agricultural and conservation easements will be the preferred method of acquisition for most parcels. Easements enable protection of these battlefields from inappropriate development while retaining private ownership and compatible use of the land. Where easements are not possible, and there is interest by the landowners, other acquisition methods, such as donation and fee simple acquisition from willing sellers based on available funding, will be utilized for battlefield preservation.

Under a 2008 estimate, the total estimated cost of purchasing in fee simple all of the 7,238 acres would be \$29.7 million. Protection of land through easements and donations, which is anticipated for a large portion of the lands, would likely significantly lower acquisition costs. The estimated cost for capital expenses (trails, wayside exhibits, rehabilitation of existing visitor contact station, etc.) and expansion-related costs (surveys, hazardous materials studies, etc.) is \$1.9 million. Development of visitor services and interpretation at these new battlefield locations would be minimal and include small parking areas, wayside exhibits, and trail and other enhancements to the sites. The annual increase in park operation and maintenance is estimated to be \$531,000. Development and operational maintenance numbers are in 2014 dollars. All funds would be subject to NPS priorities and the availability of appropriations.

Public response to the General Management Plan and the proposed boundary expansion have been uniformly favorable among local governments, organizations, and individuals. The Dinwiddie County Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution supporting future legislation to expand the boundary of the park as outlined in the General Management Plan. Many civic organizations in the Petersburg region have also indicated support for the proposal.

The bill would also effect a transfer of administrative jurisdiction between the Secretary of the Army and the Secretary of the Interior involving two small parcels of land. Following the attacks of September 11, 2001, the Army was required to erect a perimeter fence around Fort Lee Military Reservation, located adjacent to Petersburg National Battlefield. The fence intruded slightly into the boundary of the park. Effective upon enactment of this bill, the Army would receive administrative jurisdiction over the 1.170 acres of park land where the perimeter fence is located and the National Park Service would receive 1.171 acres of land at Fort Lee. The

Secretary of the Army is supportive of this provision. There is no cost associated with this exchange.

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