

**STATEMENT OF STEPHANIE TOOTHMAN, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, CULTURAL RESOURCES, PARTNERSHIPS, AND SCIENCE, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON PUBLIC LANDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATION OF THE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, CONCERNING H.R. 2430, TO ADJUST THE BOUNDARIES OF PATERSON GREAT FALLS NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK TO INCLUDE HINCHLIFFE STADIUM, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.**

**March 6, 2014**

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Mr. Chairman, members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the views of the Department of the Interior on H.R. 2430, a bill to adjust the boundaries of Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park to include Hinchliffe Stadium, and for other purposes.

The Department would support H.R. 2430 if amended as described later in this statement. The inclusion of Hinchliffe Stadium within the park boundary would facilitate the National Park Service's role in preserving and interpreting a nationally significant cultural resource associated with the history of African-American achievement and racial integration.

H.R. 2430 would amend the enabling legislation for Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park to include Hinchliffe Stadium, one of the few remaining stadiums in the country to have hosted Negro League baseball, within the park boundary. The stadium is located on approximately 6 acres of land adjacent to the existing park boundary. The park currently encompasses a large portion of the Great Falls Historic District, which is composed of resources associated with Paterson's industrial history. By including the stadium within the park boundary, this iconic property would be brought under the provisions of the park's enabling act that authorize the National Park Service to enter into cooperative agreements to identify, interpret, restore, and provide technical assistance for preservation of the property. As introduced, the bill would also authorize the National Park Service to accept the donation of the property.

Hinchliffe Stadium, an historic 10,000-seat Art Deco structure, was built as a public works project between 1931 and 1932 and served as a venue for professional and amateur baseball, automobile and motorcycle racing, entertainment and school athletic competitions. The stadium has been owned and operated by the Paterson Public School District since 1963. The School Board closed the stadium in 1996. In March, 2013, four years after Congress authorized the Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park, Hinchliffe Stadium was designated a National Historic Landmark.

The stadium's national significance is tied to its history as a Negro League Baseball venue between 1932 and 1944, serving as the home field for the New York Black Yankees, the New York Cubans, the Newark Eagles and others. Hinchliffe games featured hometown favorite and future Hall of Famer Larry Doby, who in 1947 would become the first African-American ball player to integrate the American League. As cited in the National Historic Landmark study, Hinchliffe also derives its significance from its integral role in the social history of the city. Many of Paterson's silk and other mill workers formed teams and played in the stadium, making it an

important part of the fabric of community life in industrial Paterson during the Great Depression and in decades beyond.

To raise public awareness of Hinchliffe's threatened status, the National Trust for Historic Preservation named the stadium to its 2010 list of *America's 11 Most Endangered Historic Places* and included it on their inaugural list of America's National Treasures. The National Trust has since been directly involved in seeking to preserve the stadium, and in establishing a Steering Committee comprised of the National Trust, the City of Paterson, the Paterson Board of Education, the Friends of Hinchliffe Stadium and the National Park Service. Through the efforts of the Steering Committee, approximately \$1.2 million in funding has been secured to undertake a partial restoration of the stadium, work that is expected to commence this spring. The restoration and stabilization project will identify the actions necessary to preserve and fully restore the stadium for future use.

At a special meeting of the Paterson Board of Education in May, 2013, the Board voted unanimously to support legislation that would include the stadium within the boundary of the park, with the proviso that the school district not relinquish control of the stadium, require NPS acquisition of the property, or permit the National Park Service to acquire or manage the stadium without the express support of the school district.

The Paterson Board of Education and the National Park Service are in agreement about the desirability of maintaining ownership of the stadium by the Paterson Public School District. We believe that the role of the National Park Service with respect to the stadium should be limited to providing interpretation, education, and technical preservation assistance. For that reason, the Department would support H.R. 2430 only if the bill is amended to prohibit the National Park Service from acquiring ownership of the stadium. We would be pleased to provide the committee with recommended language.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my statement. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.