

**STATEMENT OF VICTOR KNOX, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, PARK PLANNING, FACILITIES AND LANDS, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS AND PUBLIC LANDS, OF THE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, CONCERNING H.R. 1103, A BILL TO AUTHORIZE THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR TO DEVELOP, MAINTAIN, AND ADMINISTER AN ANNEX IN TINIAN, COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS, AS AN EXTENSION OF THE AMERICAN MEMORIAL PARK LOCATED IN SAIPAN, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.**

**May 17, 2012**

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Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to present the Department of the Interior's testimony regarding H.R. 1103, a bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to develop, maintain, and administer an annex in Tinian, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, as an extension of the American Memorial Park located in Saipan, and for other purposes.

The Department supports the intent of H.R. 1103 and welcomes the opportunity to interpret the important resources associated with World War II at North Field on Tinian, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI). However, we cannot commit to providing a facility or curatorial storage of World War II artifacts on non-military leased lands on Tinian at this time. We look forward to working with the sponsor and the committee regarding an appropriate role for the National Park Service (NPS) on Tinian.

H.R. 1103 would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to establish an annex to American Memorial Park on the island of Tinian. The American Memorial Park honors the American and CNMI Chamorros and Carolinians who gave their lives during the Marianas Campaign of World War II, and is a National Park System Affiliated Area. Affiliated Areas receive technical or financial aid from the NPS but are not units of the National Park System. Some of these, such as American Memorial Park, have been designated as Affiliated Areas by Congress; others have been designated by the Secretary of the Interior. The exact location of the annex on Tinian would be determined by the National Park Service and the Governor of the Northern Mariana Islands in consultation with the Mayor of Tinian. The annex would be used to interpret the important aspects of North Field by highlighting the historic events related to the World War II Marianas Campaign. It would also be used as a curatorial storage space for World War II artifacts.

A Special Resource Study of the North Field Historic District, completed in 2001, affirmed the national significance of the site. The study found that North Field represents one of the major historic events of the Pacific War – the strategic bombing of the Japanese homeland and the use of the atomic bomb in war. These events led directly to the surrender of Japan and the end of World War II. Presently, the use of the atomic bomb is not adequately represented in the national park system, and North Field represents the most intact site related to these events. The study area is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as an historic district and has been designated a national historic landmark. The landmark encompasses approximately 2,500 acres. In late July 1944, two Marine divisions succeeded in what some considered the “perfect”

amphibious operation, capturing the island of Tinian from the Japanese. A vast airfield was developed by the Naval Construction Battalions, or Seabees. North Field proved to be one of the largest, busiest, and most significant military installations of World War II. It was the site from which the B-29 bombers *Enola Gay* and *Bock's Car* lifted off on their fateful missions to Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6 and 9, 1945. Beyond this world-changing event, North Field's landscape is also layered in the remains of other periods of history, representing the 1930s Japanese sugar plantations and subsequent imperial military buildup, but also going as far back as the settlement of prehistoric Chamorro inhabitants. The landscape is cloaked today in a layer of vegetation that obscures much of the extensive collection of archeological sites and intact features that represents its rich history.

North Field's landscape is characterized by a series of runways, taxiways, and aprons on a level plateau on the northern tip of Tinian. A gridded pattern of roads embeds North Field within the larger island landscape. The airfield has both Japanese and American features, including the Japanese air apron and associated buildings that still bear scars from the 1944 invasion. Other features—U.S.-built revetments, assembly facilities, loading pits, and Runway Able—tell the story of the atomic bomb. Surrounding these features lie the overgrown remains of hardstands, taxiways, radar and defense towers, service areas, encampments, and other facilities.

The Department of Defense (DOD) holds a 50-year lease, ending in 2033, over CNMI lands comprising the study area. This lease agreement gives DOD, through the commanders of the United States Pacific Fleet and Naval Forces Marianas, exclusive use, control, and possession of lands encompassing the North Field Historic District National Historic Landmark. At the time of the study, the commander of the Pacific Fleet's position regarding the military's future long-term needs for these lands precluded recommending designation of North Field as a unit of the National Park System.

The people of Tinian are supportive of both the military use of the leased land as part of the Mariana Islands Range Complex and the preservation of the resources within military-leased lands. In addition, the people are concerned that those lands may not always remain open for visitors to access one of the most significant sites of the Pacific War and learn the story of how the small islands of the Marianas became the "tip of the spear" for America's offensive against Japan.

Development of a Tinian Annex would provide the NPS an opportunity to interpret the historic events for which the North Field Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1982 and designated a National Historic Landmark by the Secretary of the Interior in 1985. This could be done without conflicting with military needs, as it would be developed on lands outside the military leased area, and the NPS would consult with the DOD representative on Guam.

Until further details are developed about an annex in Tinian, such as curatorial facilities and site management, we are unable to provide a cost estimate. Funds for this site would be subject to NPS priorities and the availability of appropriations.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my statement. I would be pleased to answer questions that you or other members of the committee might have.

**STATEMENT OF VICTOR KNOX, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, PARK PLANNING, FACILITIES, AND LANDS, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS AND PUBLIC LANDS, COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, CONCERNING H. R. 3100, TO AUTHORIZE THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR TO EXPAND THE BOUNDARY OF THE SAN ANTONIO MISSIONS NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK, TO CONDUCT A STUDY OF POTENTIAL LAND ACQUISITIONS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.**

**May 17, 2012**

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Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to present the Department of the Interior's views on H.R. 3100, to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to expand the boundary of the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, to conduct a study of potential land acquisitions, and for other purposes.

The Department supports H.R. 3100.

H.R. 3100 would amend Section 201 of Public Law 95-629, the enabling legislation for San Antonio Missions National Historical Park (Park), for two purposes. First, it would direct the Secretary of the Interior (Secretary) to conduct a study of lands in Bexar and Wilson Counties to identify lands that would be appropriate to include within the boundaries of the Park. Second, it would expand the boundary of the Park by approximately 151 acres.

San Antonio Missions National Historical Park preserves a significant link to Mexico and Spain that has influenced the culture and history of the United States since before its inception. San Antonio is now the seventh-largest, third-fastest growing city in the United States. The city grew 68 percent between 1980 and 2007 and now almost entirely surrounds the Park with urban development, threatening areas that contain significant Spanish colonial resources historically associated with the Park. Based on the Park's General Management Plan and Land Protection Plan, which found that numerous areas containing significant Spanish colonial resources historically associated with the Park were outside the boundary, the Park has acquired a portion of those resources that now need to be included in the boundary. The Park's most recent feasibility study recommended a much larger area to best protect the cultural resources associated with the Park.

H.R. 3100 would expand the boundary of San Antonio Missions National Historical Park by approximately 151 acres, of which 132 acres are either currently owned by the National Park Service (NPS), or are being donated to the park. The remaining 19 acres are currently, and will continue to be, managed through a cooperative agreement with the land owners, the city of San Antonio and Bexar County. The management of these 19 acres will protect the cultural landscape, ensure public access, and provide for greater interpretation of the historical and architectural values of the park.

The Park's authorizing legislation allows the acquisition of new lands outside the Park boundary and allows the Park to enter into cooperative agreements to preserve historic properties and provide for visitor access and interpretation. However, the Park does not have authority to include those lands in the Park boundary, which is why this legislation is necessary. Because the park currently manages the 151 acres that would be included in the boundary, H.R. 3100 will not result in increased operational costs

H.R. 3100 also directs the Secretary to conduct a study of lands within Bexar and Wilson counties, in the State of Texas, to identify lands that would be suitable for inclusion within the boundaries of the park and denote lands that could be acquired by donation. In conducting the study, the Secretary would be required to estimate the costs of potential land acquisitions and operations associated with managing those new lands. The study would also explore management alternatives that would best ensure public access, preservation, protection, and interpretation of the Missions. We estimate that this study will cost approximately \$350,000.

This legislation enjoys the support of officials from Bexar County, Wilson County, the City of San Antonio, the City of Floresville, the San Antonio River Authority, the San Antonio Conservation Society, Los Compadres, and others. It would help guarantee the preservation, protection, restoration, and interpretation of the missions for current and future generations.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my prepared remarks. I would be happy to answer any questions you or any other members of the Subcommittees may have.

**STATEMENT OF VICTOR KNOX, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, PARK PLANNING, FACILITIES, AND LANDS, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS AND PUBLIC LANDS OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES REGARDING H.R. 4400, A BILL TO DESIGNATE THE SALT POND VISITOR CENTER AT CAPE COD NATIONAL SEASHORE AS THE THOMAS P. O'NEILL, JR. SALT POND VISITOR CENTER**

**MAY 17, 2012**

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Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to present the views of the Department of the Interior on H.R. 4400, a bill to designate the Salt Pond Visitor Center at Cape Cod National Seashore as the Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr. Salt Pond Visitor Center.

The Department supports enactment of H.R. 4400.

H.R. 4400 would recognize the contributions that former Speaker Thomas (Tip) P. O'Neill, Jr. made toward the protection of the Cape Cod National Seashore by naming the Salt Pond Visitor Center after him. In 1958, Representative Tip O'Neill became one of the first members to support protection of lands on Cape Cod as a national seashore through introduction of legislation in the 85th Congress. This important legislation proposed establishing a 40-mile long national park so every American had the ability to enjoy the marshes, ponds, and wildlife, and pristine sandy beach of Cape Cod.

Representative O'Neill continued these efforts by cosponsoring bills in the 86<sup>th</sup> and 87<sup>th</sup> Congress, testifying at hearings, and advocating for support of the legislation that led to Public Law 87-126, which established Cape Cod National Seashore when it was signed into law by President John F. Kennedy on August 7, 1961. Tip O'Neill publicly acknowledged that the legislation to establish the national seashore was a group effort and praised the commitment and the contributions of Rep. Edward Boland, Rep. James Burke, Rep. Hastings Keith and President Kennedy.

The national seashore was formally established in 1966 and Representative O'Neill attended the May 30, 1966 dedication of the Salt Pond Visitor Center. Tip O'Neill, Jr. and his family maintained a home in Harwich Port, on Cape Cod and he was a frequent visitor to the national seashore during his tenure in Congress and during his retirement years.

While the *National Park Service Management Policies 2006* state that the National Park Service will discourage and curtail the use and proliferation of commemorative works, there are two exceptions. One is when Congress specifically authorizes an exception and the other is when there is a compelling justification for the recognition, there is a strong association between the park and the person being commemorated, and at least five years have elapsed since the death of the person.

Tip O'Neill's more than fifty-year commitment to public service, including 34 years as a Member of Congress has made him an honored and esteemed friend to the mission of the National Park Service in preserving and protecting our nation's natural, historic, and cultural resources. We believe this legislation is an appropriate way to recognize Thomas P. O'Neill's role in protecting the national parks of Massachusetts and his relationship to Cape Cod National Seashore.

Mr. Chairman this concludes my statement and I will be happy to answer any questions that members of the committee may have.