

October 2, 2017

The Honorable Tom McClintock  
2331 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Colleen Hanabusa  
238 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman McClintock and Ranking Member Hanabusa:

On behalf of the Pew Charitable Trusts' Restore America's Parks campaign, I urge your support of key provisions of the Recreation Not Red-Tape Act (H.R. 3400), legislation being heard before the Subcommittee on Federal Lands this week. The Restore America's Parks program seeks to conserve the natural and cultural assets of our national parks by providing common sense, long-term solutions to the \$11.3 billion deferred maintenance backlog facing the National Park Service (NPS).

The Recreation Not Red-Tape Act, sponsored by Representative Rob Bishop (R-UT) in the House and Senator Ron Wyden, (D-OR) in the Senate, provides a number of opportunities to address NPS' deferred maintenance challenges. Specifically, it would:

- Encourage volunteer opportunities that focus on deferred maintenance, by establishing a pilot program to ensure consistent standards of maintenance on trails that cross multiple public land management agencies.
- Create an online system to purchase entrance passes. Online e-passes would help reduce traffic congestion at entrance points and reduce staffing costs at park entrance booths. A more efficient online system would also likely increase the number of passes purchased annually and additional revenue resulting from this would be directed toward the maintenance backlog.

We recommend that the Recreation Not Red-Tape Act provide authority for the NPS to collect tolls. The ability for NPS to collect modest tolls in appropriate locations, such as scenic byways that have become commuter routes, could have a considerable impact on the agency's almost \$6 billion in transportation needs. While studies would need to be done to determine whether tolling is viable, what technologies could be used to ensure traffic flow, and potential revenue generation, NPS first needs the basic authority to collect tolls.

Finally, to have an even greater impact on the NPS deferred maintenance backlog, we would recommend that the Natural Resources Committee also act to reauthorize the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (FLREA), which expires September 30, 2019, to ensure NPS' authority to collect recreation fees is maintained. Of the \$256,219,000 collected in NPS recreation fees in 2016, \$115,000,000 went to deferred maintenance needs. In 2018, 55% of the total entry fees that stay within individual park units will be used for deferred maintenance needs.

Thank you for your consideration of our views. Pew appreciates your leadership and effort on national park issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Marcia Argust". The signature is written in a dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Marcia Argust  
Director, Restore America's Parks  
The Pew Charitable Trusts

cc: Members of the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Federal Lands