

Dr. George E. Lewis, Chair of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park Commission – Thursday October 19th 2023, H. R. 1727 “*Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park Commission Extension Act*”.

Testimony

Good morning, I am Dr. George Lewis, Chair of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park Commission, here today in response to your kind invitation to testify on behalf of H.R. 1727 -- a bill which simply proposes to extend the Commission’s life until July of 2034.

The park is enormous in length; 184 ½ miles, having been cobbled together in 1971 from private, state and Federal holdings along the shoreline of the Potomac River. Congress envisioned correctly that with this diverse acquisition would come considerable controversy, and thus concurrently authorized a commission that could provide the diverse jurisdictions bordering the new park a seat at the table on topics involving the park and it’s environs.

The Commission is composed of 19 volunteers (2 each from the 4 Maryland counties boarding the park, 2 each recommended by the Governors of Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia, and 3 – including the Chair – are appointed by the Secretary of the Interior). The Commission is apolitical and its Commissioners bring with them a vast treasure of public and private sector experience and expertise to draw upon when advising the Secretary of the Interior on matters involving the administration and development of the park.

The duties of the Commission are solely advisory.

The Commission holds public meetings two/three times a year to receive input from the public and address public concerns as appropriate.

The Commission's high value to the Park Superintendent, the National Park Service, the Secretary of the Interior, and the park's neighbors, visitors, and Congressional constituents lies not only in its vast experience and diverse expertise, but as well in the Commission's ability to communicate successfully with each of these entities.

I encourage this august body to act favorably on H.R. 1727.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

I am available to answer any questions you may have.

Dr. George Lewis
Chair, C&O Canal National Historical Park Commission
October 19, 2023