

STATEMENT OF JOHN PARSONS, ASSOCIATE REGIONAL DIRECTOR FOR LANDS, RESOURCES, AND PLANNING, NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, RECREATION, AND PUBLIC LANDS OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES, CONCERNING H.R. 3747, A BILL TO DIRECT THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR TO CONDUCT A STUDY OF THE SITE COMMONLY KNOWN AS EAGLEDALE FERRY DOCK AT TAYLOR AVENUE, IN THE STATE OF WASHINGTON, FOR POTENTIAL INCLUSION IN THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM.

SEPTEMBER 5, 2002

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to present the Department's views on H.R. 3747, a bill to direct the Secretary of Interior to conduct a study of the site commonly known as Eagledale Ferry dock at Taylor Avenue in the state of Washington for potential inclusion in the National Park System.

The Department does not oppose this bill. Presently, there are 34 studies pending, of which we expect to transmit 4 to Congress by the end of 2002. We have also testified this Congress on 15 proposals that would authorize studies of new sites. To meet the President's Initiative to eliminate the deferred maintenance backlog, we must continue to focus our resources on caring for existing areas in the National Park System. Thus, we have concerns about adding new funding requirements for new park units, national trails, wild and scenic rivers or heritage areas at the same time that we are trying to reduce the deferred maintenance backlog. As such, the Department will identify all acquisition, one time and operational costs of the proposed site. At this time, those costs are unknown.

Because of their proximity to Fort Warden, a key Pacific theater listening post, the Japanese-Americans from Bainbridge Island were the first group to be interned under Civilian Exclusion Order No. 1. On March 30, 1942 only six days after the order was issued, 227 men, women, and children were forcibly removed from their homes, boarded the ferry at Eagledale, bound for Manzanar, and later Minidoka Relocation Centers. Members of an exceptionally integrated community on the small island, their internment was strongly protested by the local newspaper editor and many members of the community; powerful historic photographs record the passage of the internees as they were marched down Taylor Avenue to the ferry dock. Many of the internees returned to their Bainbridge Island home after the war to rebuild their lives. Survivors and their children and grandchildren, together with the larger Bainbridge

community, are today committed to creating an enduring memorial to honor the internees and tell the story of internment.

The National Park Service has begun developing a General Management Plan for the Minidoka Internment National Monument established in 2001. Inasmuch as the Eagledale Ferry dock was used as the embarkation point for Japanese and Japanese-Americans forced to move to internment camps, the General Management Plan will consider the relationship of sites such as the Eagledale Ferry Dock to the Minidoka Internment National Monument. The National Park Service has also been working with citizen groups and the City of Bainbridge Island to document the significance of the Eagledale Ferry Dock site as it relates to the story of the internment of Japanese and Japanese Americans during World War II.

At the national level, the National Park Service is sponsoring National Historic Landmark theme studies related to the history of Japanese Americans and to the home front during World War II. Both studies should provide significant information on the history of the Japanese in the Pacific Northwest, including those who settled on Bainbridge Island. In addition, we serve as the stewards of two of the camps to which the Bainbridge internees were sent – Manzanar National Historic Site and Minidoka Internment National Monument.

This concludes my testimony. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this issue and I would be willing to answer any questions you may have on this issue.