

STATEMENT OF P. DANIEL SMITH, SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE BEFORE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, RECREATION AND PUBLIC LANDS, HOUSE COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES CONCERNING H.R. 2099, A BILL TO AMEND THE OMNIBUS PARKS AND PUBLIC LANDS MANAGEMENT ACT OF 1996 TO INCREASE THE AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE VANCOUVER NATIONAL HISTORIC RESERVE AND THE PRESERVATION OF VANCOUVER BARRACKS.

July 9, 2002

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to present the views of the Department of the Interior on H.R. 2099, a bill to amend the Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996 to increase the authorization of appropriations for the Vancouver National Historic Reserve and for the preservation of Vancouver Barracks.

The Department recognizes and appreciates the efforts of our partners to cooperatively administer the Vancouver National Historic Reserve. This is a partnership that has worked well, and we look forward to continuing our work with the City of Vancouver, State of Washington, and the Department of the Army to achieve the goals outline in the Cooperative Management Plan for the Reserve. However, in light of the Department's commitment to supporting the President's initiative to eliminate the deferred maintenance backlog in our parks, we cannot support diverting limited funds away from the Service's own needs. We believe that funds that are appropriated to the National Park Service are more appropriately directed to reducing the long list of necessary but deferred construction projects that have been identified in our national parks.

The Vancouver area of southwestern Washington was an important site of 19th-century social, economic, political, and military activity in the Pacific Northwest. In recognition of its historical significance, Congress in 1948 designated a portion of the area—Fort Vancouver—as a National Monument, and in 1961 Fort Vancouver became a National Historic Site. Over the next several decades, continuing efforts to preserve the area's other historic sites prompted Congress, in 1990, to pass legislation authorizing the creation of a

Vancouver Historical Study Commission. Subsequently, the commission recommended the establishment of a reserve as the best management strategy for protection of the resources within the study area, and in 1996, Congress passed legislation that established the Vancouver National Historic Reserve. The Reserve itself is not a unit of the National Park System, although the Fort Vancouver National Historic Site component is part of the System.

The Reserve encompasses 366 acres along the Columbia River within the City of Vancouver, Washington, and includes a particularly rich collection of cultural resources, including Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, Officers Row, Vancouver Barracks, Pearson Air Museum and Air Field, portions of the Columbia River waterfront, and the Water Resources Education Center. In this nationally significant historic setting, the Reserve celebrates well over 200 years of history including the use of the area by Native Americans; the creation of the first multi-cultural village of its kind in the Pacific; the Hudson Bay Company's Fort Vancouver, which was one of the largest such British enterprises; and the growth of the U.S. Army in the Pacific Northwest as reflected in the historic Officers Row and Vancouver Barracks.

The law that established the Reserve directed the preparation of a general management plan to be developed by a partnership comprised of the National Park Service, the Historic Preservation Office of the State of Washington, the Department of the Army, and the City of Vancouver, Washington. The plan, completed in early 2000 and approved by the Secretary of the Interior, envisions an active public/private partnership in managing the shared assets of the Reserve. The Reserve partners, while maintaining full authority and management responsibilities for their individual areas consistent with applicable laws, work cooperatively on all matters relating to the Reserve. Additional financial support comes from the privately based nonprofit Vancouver National Historic Reserve Trust. The cornerstones of the 15-year Cooperative Management Plan are preservation, education, and public use.

The plan, however, is not a budget document. While it identified estimated costs for recommended actions, it did not commit any of the agencies or other partners to specific funding requirements. Signature by the

partners or the Secretaries did not commit the Department of Interior or Army to any funding requirements outside of agency budgets as approved by Congress.

The law that established the Reserve authorized the appropriation of \$400,000 annually for operational costs, and a total of \$5 million for development costs. These funds have been provided in the National Park Service budgets for fiscal years 1998 through 2002 in the construction and statutory aid accounts.

The Cooperative Management Plan for the Reserve provided a summary of development costs estimated at approximately \$85 million (in 1998 dollars). The plan contemplates that the costs will be shared by the federal government, the state, the city, nonprofit groups and organizations, and private investors, corporations, and businesses. The federal share could be allocated from the U.S. Army, the U.S. Army Reserve, the Department of Defense, or the Department of the Interior.

The Vancouver National Historic Reserve has benefited greatly from the contributions made by our partners and other donors, who have already provided over \$19 million for a wide variety of projects, and plan to provide approximately \$20 million more for projects that have already been identified.

We would like to emphasize that we are committed to working with our partners in the Vancouver National Historic Reserve to find appropriate ways to meet the goals outlined in the Cooperative Management Plan. We encourage our partners in the Reserve to continue to seek funding and other solutions for the preservation and protection of its resources through grants and other programs administered by the Service, the Department, and other federal agencies.

This concludes my testimony. I am glad to answer any questions that you or members of the Subcommittee may have.