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A subsidiary of NIC Inc.
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Before the Subcommittee on Public Lands and Environmental Regulation
of the Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
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Hearing on H.R.____ (Bishop), To Amend the Federal Lands
Recreation Enhancement Act to improve consistency and
accountability in the collection and expenditure of Federal
recreation fees, and for other purposes.

Good morning Chairman Bishop, Ranking Member Grijalva, and other members of the Subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss how technology can improve consistency and accountability in the collection and expenditure of federal recreation fees, and help enhance the visitor experience for those who enjoy our federal recreation lands and waters. My name is Elizabeth Pemmerl, and I am the President of NIC Technologies, the federal government services division of NIC Inc.

Our Company

NIC is the nation's leading provider of official government web sites, online services, mobile applications, and secure payment processing. We provide the official state websites for 29 states, including Utah and Oregon. We also provide a comprehensive online service for the Department of Transportation's Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) that allows motor carriers to check driver records for prospective employees. Since the Pre-Employment Screening Program launched in 2010, NIC has processed over 2.5 million driver record requests on behalf of FMCSA.¹

We focus on building solutions that make it easy and efficient for taxpayers to access government information and securely process all types of government transactions. In the majority of our engagements with government, NIC is able to build and manage online services at no cost to government agencies. Through our unique self-funded model, NIC provides the upfront funding for eGovernment services, and then recoups our investment through modest fees paid by citizens or businesses electing to use the service. These funds are then rededicated to support the cost of maintaining the web platform, including ongoing improvements and customer support. A 2013 study from the University of Utah found that implementing transaction-based contracting for eGovernment services has saved the State of Utah \$61 million over 5 years.²

Applications for Recreational Programs

¹ See attachment I

² See attachment II

We believe that technology can help make a wide range of government operations more efficient, secure and transparent. Employing the right technology can also save the government money. Agencies devote significant resources to entering data, printing forms, mailing and storing documents. Online services can help decrease these costs, and recreation programs are no exception.

In states ranging from Maine to Mississippi, NIC provides services that streamline the administration of hunting and fishing systems and game lotteries. For example, in the state of Hawaii, NIC's online camping system allows visitors to make reservations, buy permits, check site availability, and submit payments. The system then provides reports and transparent financial data back to the state. The state estimates the system saves thousands of dollars per year compared to the existing paper-based process.

In the state of Maine, NIC launched a campground reservations application on behalf of the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry in February 2014. On opening day, nearly 1,000 reservations were processed in the first hour.

Technology offers additional benefits - it offers consumers choices. Visitors to our nation's recreation sites want the ability to purchase passes and permits whenever, wherever – whether on a computer, tablet or mobile device. In the state of Montana, NIC helps provide residents and non-residents access to Montana's abundant wildlife by offering the online, immediate purchase of hunting and fishing licenses and accepting submissions for lottery draws.

Consumers also want to use technology to enhance their visit to federal lands. Mobile applications could allow visitors to report an invasive species sighting, or upload photos to a library that is 'crowd-sourced' from visitors to a specific park or recreation area.

Consumers want technology to make compliance more convenient. In Arkansas, hunters have the option to use the camera on their phone to file required game checks via NIC's mobile game check application. Now, hunters don't have to make a trip to a game warden or remember to file paperwork days after the hunt.

These solutions are available today, but the sky is the limit for what comes next.

It would be easy to make your National Park pass available on your iPhone, just like a mobile boarding pass at the airport, or associate GPS data with the purchase of a permit, so that recreation fees can be dedicated to targeted regions. The state of Utah is considering the prospects of wearable technologies. The state, in collaboration with NIC, announced the first government application for Google Glass just last month. The application will inform users when the next public bus or tram will arrive at their stop. Perhaps future generations of park visitors will use Google Glass to pull up a trail map!

We commend the Subcommittee for evaluating how technology solutions can play an important role in federal recreation programs.

NIC is proud to play a role in these great success stories from many of your home states. As you reauthorize the Act, we encourage you to consider authorizing pilot

projects to explore similar innovative partnerships, creative service delivery approaches, and alternative contracting models for these exciting technology services.

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Subcommittee. I look forward to any questions you may have.

Attachments

- I. Case study on NIC's work for the Department of Transportation FMCSA's Pre-Employment Screening Program
- II. Executive summary of December 2013 study from the Center for Public Policy & Administration, University of Utah, *Smarter eGovernment: The Economics of Online Services in Utah*