

**STATEMENT OF WILLIAM SHADDOX, CHIEF, LAND RESOURCES DIVISION,
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE
THE HOUSE NATURAL RESOURCES SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS,
FORESTS, AND PUBLIC LANDS, REGARDING H.R. 1492, A BILL TO UPDATE THE
MAP OF, AND MODIFY THE MAXIMUM ACREAGE AVAILABLE FOR INCLUSION
IN, THE YUCCA HOUSE NATIONAL MONUMENT.**

JULY 18, 2019

Chairwoman Haaland, Ranking Member Young, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to provide the Department of the Interior's views on H.R. 1492, a bill to update the map of, and modify the maximum acreage available for inclusion in Yucca House National Monument.

The Department supports H.R. 1492 with amendments described later in this statement.

H.R. 1492 would include within the boundary of Yucca House National Monument a 160-acre parcel of land adjacent to the monument and authorize the National Park Service (NPS) to acquire the parcel by donation. Yucca House, located in Montezuma County in southwestern Colorado, acted as an important community center for the Ancestral Pueblo people from AD 1150-1300. Due to its significance as an excellent example of a valley pueblo, Woodrow Wilson designated Yucca House a national monument by Presidential Proclamation on December 19, 1919. The monument is a largely unexcavated site that currently consists of approximately 34 acres. It is surrounded by private land and has limited access.

Currently, a county road that crosses private land is the only way for the public to access the monument. Visitor traffic and parking along this route interfere with the landowner's ranching operation, and the lack of signage to enter the park through this route causes confusion. The additional land that could be acquired under H.R. 1492 would enable the NPS to provide an alternative route for public access. The Montezuma County Board of Commissioners passed a resolution in September, 2017, supporting the addition to facilitate access.

The expanded acreage would also provide access to several key archeological sites based on findings prepared by the Colorado Archeological Society. The NPS plans to continue archeological surveys of the area. It would allow the NPS to develop opportunities for the public to explore the social dynamics, ceremony spaces, and migrations of the Ancestral Pueblo community as well as the unique and unspoiled landscapes the site offers.

The Department recommends that H.R. 1492 be amended to reference an updated map of the proposed boundary revision and to provide for the acquisition of the property prior to adding it to the boundary of the park. We would be pleased to provide recommended amendments for those purposes.

Chairwoman Haaland, this concludes my statement. I would be pleased to answer any questions you or other members of the Subcommittee may have.

**STATEMENT OF WILLIAM SHADDOX, CHIEF, LAND RESOURCES DIVISION,
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE
THE HOUSE NATURAL RESOURCES SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS,
FORESTS, AND PUBLIC LANDS, REGARDING H.R. 2819, A BILL TO EXTEND THE
AUTHORITY FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMMEMORATIVE WORK IN
HONOR OF GOLD STAR FAMILIES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.**

July 18, 2019

Chairwoman Haaland, Ranking Member Young, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the views of the Department of the Interior on H.R. 2819, a bill to extend the authority for the establishment of a commemorative work in honor of Gold Star Families and for other purposes.

The Department of the Interior does not object to H.R. 2819, but recommends an amendment described later in this testimony.

The bill would extend the authority through January 2, 2027, for the Gold Star Mothers National Monument Foundation (Foundation) to establish in the District of Columbia or its environs a commemorative work to commemorate the sacrifices made by mothers, and made by their sons and daughters who as members of the Armed Forces make the ultimate sacrifice, in defense of the United States. The proposed commemorative work has been referred to as the “Gold Star Mothers National Monument”, the “Gold Star Mothers Family Monument”, and the “Gold Star Families National Monument.” Currently, the Foundation’s authorization is set to expire on January 2, 2020.

While the Department understands the desire of the Foundation to seek more time to establish the memorial, we recommend that the bill be amended to grant a 4-year instead of a 7-year extension. That would set a new expiration date of January 2, 2024. Four years should be an adequate amount of time for the Foundation to complete the requirements under the Commemorative Works Act (CWA), 40 U.S.C. Chapter 89, for establishing the authorized commemorative work, as the Foundation has already identified a preferred site and has made progress on design. With an additional four years, the Foundation should be in a viable position to achieve site and design approvals as well as to raise the minimum 75 percent of the funds sufficient to build the memorial. Once the Foundation meets these thresholds, the Secretary of the Interior may exercise his authority under the CWA to grant an additional three-year administrative extension to allow the Foundation to finalize construction documents and raise the balance of necessary funding. We would be happy to work with the Committee on this amendment.

In December 2013, the Foundation presented its site analysis to the National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission. In that informational presentation, they expressed a preference for a site location adjacent to Arlington National Cemetery. In January 2015, the National Capital Planning Commission expressed support for a site next to the Arlington National Cemetery Visitor’s Center on Memorial Avenue. The Commission of Fine Arts also supports that site

location. Final site approvals are dependent on approval of the memorial design, which the Foundation is working on now along with fundraising.

Ms. Chairwoman, this concludes my statement. I would be pleased to answer any questions you or other members of the Subcommittee may have.