

February 25, 2020

The Honorable Representative Raúl M. Grijalva  
Chairman, Natural Resources Committee  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Representative Deb Haaland  
Chairwoman, Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Grijalva and Chairwoman Haaland:

As organizations collectively representing hundreds of thousands of people across the country, Corporate Accountability, Surfrider Foundation, and the undersigned want to affirm our support for H.R. 4236 - *Reducing Waste in National Parks Act* reintroduced by U.S. Representative Mike Quigley (IL-05) in September 2019.

Our national parks stand as symbols of sustainability, conservation, and environmental education for the millions of park-goers that visit them annually. In order to preserve these lands for generations to come, national parks across the country must phase out the sale of single-use plastic water bottles. The benefits of policies that encourage the reduction of plastic bottles in parks are clear and have been documented by the National Park Service itself. The National Park Service issued Policy Memo 11-03, "Recycling and Reduction of Disposable Plastic Bottles in Parks" in December 2011. This memo allowed parks to voluntarily establish single-use plastic bottle water sales elimination programs with the aim of plastics reduction.<sup>i</sup> Twenty-three National Park Service park units adopted this policy between 2011 and 2016.

In a May 2017 report, the National Park Service found that the policies had immense environmental benefits. These policies resulted in annual savings of up to two million water bottles, equivalent to the prevention of nearly 112,000 pounds of plastic from being sold and discarded yearly, and prevented carbon dioxide equivalent emissions by up to 140 metric tons per year.<sup>ii</sup> These are just a few examples of how PM 11-03 has strengthened our parks, protected wildlife, and stymied the release of emissions that contribute to climate change.

This is why we were glad to see that, after PM 11-03 was inexplicably rescinded in 2017,<sup>iii</sup> Rep. Quigley quickly introduced legislation to restore the policy and give National Park Service regional directors discretion to end the sale of single-use plastic water bottles following thorough feasibility studies. We are also encouraged that H.R. 4236 calls on the regional directors to examine tangible alternatives to these products such as the sale of BPA-free reusable containers, bottle refill stations, and onsite and online education that asks visitors to bring their own bottles.<sup>iv</sup>

We, the undersigned organizations, encourage members of the House Natural Resources Committee to support this important piece of legislation for our national parks and natural resources. The reduction of

bottled water waste in these spaces will help ensure that the country's most beautiful public lands are protected for future generations to explore.

Thank you for your consideration,

Alissa Weinman

Senior Organizer

Corporate Accountability

Denise Patel

U.S. Program Coordinator

GAIA: Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives

Christy Leavitt

Plastics Campaign Director

Oceana

Michael O'Heaney

Executive Director

Story of Stuff Project

Angela T. Howe, Esq.

Legal Director

Surfrider Foundation

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<sup>i</sup> "'Disposable Plastic Water Bottle Recycling and Reduction' Program Evaluation Report" (National Park Service, May 2017), 2, [https://www.nps.gov/aboutus/foia/upload/Disposable-Plastic-Water-Bottle-Evaluation-Report\\_5\\_11\\_17.pdf](https://www.nps.gov/aboutus/foia/upload/Disposable-Plastic-Water-Bottle-Evaluation-Report_5_11_17.pdf).

<sup>ii</sup> "'Disposable Plastic Water Bottle Recycling and Reduction' Program Evaluation Report," 8.

<sup>iii</sup> Darryl Fears, "National Parks Put a Ban on Bottled Water to Ease Pollution. Trump Just Sided with the Lobby That Fought It.," Washington Post, August 17, 2017, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2017/08/17/national-parks-banned-bottled-water-to-ease-pollution-trump-just-sided-with-the-lobby-that-fought-it/>.

<sup>iv</sup> Representative Mike Quigley, "H.R.4236 - Reducing Waste in National Parks Act" (United States Congress, September 6, 2019), <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/4236>.