

**Subcommittee Chair Debra Haaland
NPFPL Legislative Hearing
Opening Statement
February 27, 2020**

- **Thank you all for attending today’s Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands’ legislative hearing.**
- **I would like to extend my gratitude to the bill sponsors who are joining us to testify and to the witnesses, many of whom have traveled a long way to join us.**
- **We are here today to continue this Subcommittee’s work overseeing and enhancing the ongoing and future management of our national parks and public lands.**
- **Earlier this morning the National Park Service announced that visitation to national parks exceeded 300 million for the fifth consecutive year – there were 327 million visits to national parks in 2019 alone.**
- **These impressive visitation number show that our national parks truly are the envy of the world, and our constituents expect Congress to invest in their future.**

- **Yes, that means addressing deferred maintenance, which is why we have been working with Ranking Member Bishop to find a path forward for the Restore Our Parks and Public Lands Act.**
- **But it also means promoting sustainability, allowing our parks and public lands to act as incubators for innovation and serve a role in addressing the climate crisis.**
- **Our parks can protect our shared past AND help us prepare for the future.**
- **That is why I am encouraged by today's hearing on bills to promote zero-emissions technology, reduce plastic waste, and increase access to greenspace in park-poor urban communities.**
- **H.R. 3681, the Green Spaces, Green Vehicles Act, introduced by Committee Member Representative Mike Levin of California, will create a collaborative program between the Department of Energy, the National Park Service, and the U.S Forest Service to promote the use of zero emissions vehicles.**
- **The bill promotes the installation of charging station infrastructure on public lands and encourages land management agencies to modernize their own fleets with more electric vehicles.**

- **The transportation sector is the largest contributor to U.S. GHG emissions – with light-duty vehicles accounting for 59 percent of transportation-related GHG emissions.**
- **If we are serious about confronting the climate crisis, we need to invest in emissions reduction technology, so I am excited to hear more about Representative Levin’s bill and the potential for public lands to help us meet that goal.**
- **Reducing plastic waste is another pillar of climate action this Committee can support.**
- **Representative Mike Quigley’s Reducing Waste in National Parks Act achieves this goal by codifying an Obama administration policy authorizing park superintendents to phase out the sale of disposable plastic water bottles after thorough evaluation and engagement with park partners, concessioners, and the broader public.**
- **This was a successful policy that helped avoid between 1 to 2 million disposable plastic water bottles from being purchased, used, and discarded every year between 2011 and 2017.**

- **Unfortunately, it was overturned by the Trump administration with little study two weeks after Interior Secretary Bernhardt, a former lobbyist for the bottled water industry, was confirmed by the Senate for the Deputy Secretary position.**
- **Rep. Quigley and I learned about the importance of reducing plastic waste to our national parks when we visited Yellowstone last year, and now we have an opportunity to restore this program to limit pollution in our national parks.**
- **In addition to sustainable management of our national parks and public lands, we are also reviewing a bill to promote access to green space.**
- **Rep. Nanette Barragan's Outdoors for All Act establishes guaranteed funding for the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Program, a competitive grant program to create and enhance parks and outdoor recreation areas in low-income and park-poor urban communities.**
- **Lastly, H.R. 3651 introduced by Representative Jeff Fortenberry of Nebraska, would alter the terms of a public purpose conveyance associated with the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail Interpretative Center.**

- **Congress authorized this conveyance to the Missouri River Basin Lewis and Clark Interpretive Trail and Visitor Center Foundation for outdoor recreation purposes.**
- **The Foundation is now interested in leasing the parcel - I am eager to learn more about the National Park Service's perspective on the proposed lease.**
- **With that I will turn it over to the Ranking Member for his remarks and yield back the balance of my time.**