

Good morning Chairwoman Haaland, Ranking Member Curtis, and members of the subcommittee,

Thank you for inviting me to address you this morning and for considering HR 4236, the **Reducing Waste in National Parks Act**

Which would help address the serious problem of plastic waste from single-use plastic water bottles sullyng America's most pristine natural places.

According to the EPA, about 70 percent of plastic water bottles are not recycled and end up in landfills, lakes, streams, oceans, or just on the ground.

In our parks, this means that single-use plastic bottles are collecting on trails and in remote areas- like the bottom of the Grand Canyon- degrading the environment and endangering wildlife.

In the past, the National Park Service has been a visible leader on sustainability.

In 2011, the NPS directed individual parks to increase their efforts to recycle and reduce waste- including banning the sale of single-use plastic water bottles where possible.

The program was a smashing success and parks that implemented the plan were able to produce real results.

Zion National Park in Utah was able to eliminate the sale of over 60,000 plastic water bottles, or 5,000 pounds of plastic waste, by stocking affordable reusable water bottles in their concessions and installing reusable bottle filling stations.

Despite these successes, this program was rolled back.

My bill would simply reinstate the program and give regional directors the authority to implement it in a way that makes the most sense in their local context.

This bill would not uniformly ban the sale of plastic water bottles in parks- there are Parks facilities without running water or in harsh environments that may require water be available.

It also does not ban plastic bottles for soft drinks or other non-water beverages. It only covers single-use plastic water bottles.

Plastic waste in concessions and near visitor centers is undoubtedly a problem, but it is a separate problem that deserves a separate solution.

This bill is a common-sense, nuanced approach to reduce the waste building up in the backcountry, wilderness and trails of our parks.

Last September, I traveled to Yellowstone National Park with Chairwoman Haaland and a number of our congressional colleagues to learn more about the impacts of climate change on our parks.

There, I purchased this bottle for about the same price as a plastic water bottle but made of aluminum, which is much more easily recyclable.

These bottles are great and showcase the how easy it will be- and in fact once was!- for parks and the vendors that provide concessions in them, to adapt to this new policy.

While I do need to run to another hearing in the Appropriations Committee this morning, I look forward to fielding any questions you may have in writing and I'm confident that the witnesses here today can help speak to the urgent need to reestablish this policy.

On behalf of myself and the 26 other Co-Sponsors of this bill, thank you for your time and for holding this hearing today and I'm hopeful that this bill can earn swift passage through this committee.