



**Testimony of Natalie Randall Managing Director, Utah Office of Tourism and Film Commission**  
**Before the House Subcommittee on Federal Lands, Committee on Natural Resources Hearing**  
**on H.R. 4285 (Rep. Maloy), "Semiquincentennial Tourism and Access to Recreation Sites Act**  
**(STARS Act)"**

**July 16, 2025**

Chairman Tiffany, Ranking Member Neguse, and Members of the Subcommittee:

My name is Natalie Randall and I am the Managing Director for the Utah Office and Film Commission. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today in support of the Semiquincentennial Tourism and Access to Recreation Sites Act, or the STARS Act, introduced by Congresswoman Celeste Maloy. It is an honor to appear before the Subcommittee on Federal Lands to speak on the importance of expanding public access to our national parks and public lands as we prepare to commemorate the semiquincentennial anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, or America250 as it is known in communities across the United States.

In my capacity as the director for the Utah Office of Tourism, I work closely with rural and urban communities, businesses, outdoor recreation partners, and public land management agencies to promote responsible access, economic opportunity, and the stewardship of our nation's extraordinary natural and cultural resources.

National parks and public lands are not only a cherished part of America's heritage but also vital economic engines for communities nationwide. In Utah alone, our national park sites attracted over 15.7 million visitors in 2023, contributing more than \$1.9 billion in visitor spending and supporting 26,500 local jobs. Designating September 17, 2026, as a fee-free day—celebrating the United States Semiquincentennial—will encourage even greater public participation in this historic milestone, allowing accessible visitation to our National Park areas.

Utah is globally renowned for our Five National Parks, known as the Mighty Five, as well as thirteen other national places. For the gateway communities to these areas, tourism is a lifeblood and a key driving force behind the primary source of income and economy for many Utahns. This has sparked a "ripple effect" leading to improvements in local amenities and infrastructure, such as sustaining locally owned restaurants and storefronts, while also supporting road improvements and well-equipped community services.

The invitation and accessibility a fee-free day creates allows these communities to share their heritage with visitors across the country and world. In Utah, our America250 celebration is centered on three key themes: Educate, Engage, and Unite, including a focus on the power of Utah's landscapes. These

landscapes offer a powerful lens through which we can view the past, serve as a jumping-off point for adventure, and foster learning about the mountains, deserts, and waterways Utahns call home. We hope that by celebrating the outdoors, Utahns and visitors can take time to examine our natural environments and use them to find connections to each other and our country's history.

I commend Congresswoman Maloy for her leadership in introducing this legislation, and I urge the Committee to advance the STARS Act as a meaningful, accessible, and unifying way for Americans to gather, reflect, and celebrate our nation's history in the places that tell its story.

Thank you for the opportunity to address this Subcommittee and for your attention to this act. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.