

**TESTIMONY OF ROBERT D. MACLEAN
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON FEDERAL LANDS
LEGISLATIVE HEARING ON
H.R. 5103, “MAKE THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA SAFE AND BEAUTIFUL ACT”**

December 2, 2025

Chairman Tiffany, Ranking Member Neguse, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the Department of the Interior (Department) on H.R. 5103, the Make the District of Columbia Safe and Beautiful Act.

The Department supports H.R. 5103, which aligns closely with Executive Order (EO) 14252, “Making the District of Columbia Safe and Beautiful,” issued by President Donald J. Trump on March 27, 2025. Together, the bill and the executive order advance a shared goal: ensuring that the Nation’s Capital is clean, safe, and beautiful, reflective of our history and heritage.

The Department, primarily through the National Park Service (NPS) and the United States Park Police (USPP), has long been entrusted with stewarding many of the District of Columbia’s most iconic landscapes, memorials, and public spaces. From the National Mall and its surrounding monuments to the parkways, circles, and historic squares that define the city, these lands carry immense symbolic and civic importance. In recent years, the District of Columbia has faced challenges that threaten both the safety of its residents and visitors, as well as the integrity of these public spaces. Graffiti, vandalism, encampments, lack of maintenance and public safety concerns have all compromised the public’s ability to enjoy and take pride in the Nation’s Capital.

In EO 14252, President Trump directed the Administration to take immediate steps to confront these challenges and make the District of Columbia both safe by fighting crime and beautiful. EO 14252 established the D.C. Safe and Beautiful Task Force. It also directed the Secretary of the Interior to work with other Federal and District of Columbia officials to develop and implement a program to beautify the District of Columbia and to ensure the prompt removal of graffiti, restoration of defaced monuments, and clearance of unsafe encampments on federal lands.

H.R. 5103 codifies the principles of EO 14252. It statutorily establishes the District of Columbia Safe and Beautiful Commission that, as described in the EO, will “work closely with local officials to share information, develop joint priorities, and maximize resources to make the District of Columbia safe.” H.R. 5103 also directs the Secretary of the Interior to develop a program to beautify the District of Columbia, focusing on cleanliness, restoration and encouraging private-sector participation.

Codifying these principles in statute will allow the Department to plan more effectively and invest in long-term strategies to work with others to restore and maintain the Nation's Capital. This work has begun with Secretary Burgum's issuance of Secretary's Order (SO) 3428, that recognizes the Department's unique responsibilities in this mission, including management of over approximately 1,000 acres of the District of Columbia's most significant cultural landscapes and USPP's long history in their protection. In accordance with these directives, the NPS has deployed dedicated teams within the NPS's National Capital Region to carry out enhanced maintenance and beautification projects, accelerated repairs to infrastructure and monuments, and established systematic programs for landscape improvements and public space upkeep. In doing so, we not only improve the physical condition of these lands but also enhance public safety, as clean, well-maintained spaces that discourage crime and foster civic pride.

The legislation also addresses one of the most persistent challenges in the National Capital Region: overlapping jurisdiction. Public safety and maintenance responsibilities in the District of Columbia often involve federal, municipal, and private entities with overlapping roles. By establishing a clear statutory mandate, the bill fosters a unified approach to stewardship, reducing friction and duplication, aligning responsibilities, and enabling federal and local agencies to work together more effectively to deliver seamless stewardship and a world-class visitor experience across jurisdictions.

H.R. 5103 also reaffirms Congress's commitment to protecting the monuments, memorials and historic sites that draw millions of visitors each year to the District of Columbia. These iconic landmarks and spaces in the capital city should be clean and safe for every American to experience and enjoy. For these reasons, the Department supports passage of H.R. 5103 and looks forward to working with Congress to ensure its successful implementation.

The Department is immensely proud of the USPP and all of its law enforcement officers who serve across our bureaus and offices. These dedicated professionals safeguard our public lands, protect natural and cultural resources, and ensure the safety of millions of visitors each year. Their service and sacrifice are a powerful reflection of the Department's unwavering commitment to the American people. We honor their courage, professionalism, and the vital role they play in upholding the mission of the Department every single day.

Chairman Tiffany, this concludes my testimony. I would be pleased to answer any questions you or other Members of the Subcommittee may have.