



December, 17 2025

**Re: Chiricahua National Park Act**

Chairman Tiffany:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the Questions for the Record following my testimony before the Subcommittee on Federal Lands regarding H.R. 6380, the *Chiricahua National Park Act*. I appreciate the Committee's continued interest in understanding the local and regional impacts of this legislation.

**Response to Question 1:**

*How will elevating Chiricahua National Monument to National Park status directly benefit the City of Willcox and the surrounding communities, particularly in terms of increased tourism revenue?*

Redesignating Chiricahua National Monument as a National Park would provide direct and meaningful economic benefits to the City of Willcox and surrounding rural communities through increased visitation, longer visitor stays, and higher tourism-related spending. National Park designation brings global recognition that consistently elevates visitation levels and strengthens gateway communities.

In addition to my role as Mayor, I am also a small business owner in Willcox and operate a local hotel. From that perspective, I can attest firsthand to how increased visitation directly supports local businesses. An increase in park-related tourism would generate additional revenue for lodging establishments like mine, allowing for reinvestment in facilities, improved guest services, and the ability to offer fair and competitive compensation to employees. These are critical factors in sustaining a healthy workforce and maintaining quality standards in rural communities.

Importantly, the economic benefits do not stop at individual businesses. Increased hotel occupancy and visitor spending translate into higher sales tax and transient lodging tax revenues for the City of Willcox. These revenues support essential quality-of-life improvements for residents, including public safety services, street maintenance, infrastructure upgrades, and community amenities. In this way, National Park designation creates a positive cycle where tourism growth strengthens local businesses, which in turn strengthens municipal services and long-term community resilience.



**Response to Question 2:**

*Your testimony mentioned research that suggests a 21 percent increase in recreation visits after National Monuments are redesignated as National Parks. Do you anticipate a similar influx of visitation if Chiricahua is designated as a national park? Do you believe the City of Willcox has the infrastructure to accommodate such visitation increases?*

Yes, the City of Willcox has the infrastructure and capacity to accommodate an increase in visitors associated with National Park designation.

Current estimates place annual visitation to Chiricahua National Monument at approximately 62,000 visitors per year. Based on research cited during the hearing, redesignation to National Park status could reasonably be expected to increase visitation by approximately 21 percent. This projected growth is meaningful but manageable and well within the City's planning horizon.

Willcox has proactively invested in core infrastructure, including water and wastewater systems, transportation corridors, public safety services, and tourism-related amenities. The City also has available land, existing lodging inventory with room for expansion, and an established tourism and marketing framework designed to responsibly absorb additional visitation over time.

Equally important, Willcox views this increase as a gradual and sustainable opportunity rather than an abrupt surge. This allows the City to continue coordinating with federal and state partners, pursue targeted infrastructure funding, and ensure that growth is managed appropriately.

In summary, the City of Willcox is prepared to support and responsibly manage increased visitation associated with National Park designation and views this legislation as an opportunity to strengthen both the local economy and long-term community quality of life.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide additional information. I appreciate the Committee's consideration of this important legislation and remain available to answer any further questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Greg Hancock".

City of Willcox  
Mayor Greg Hancock