

**Testimony of Charles Cuvelier,
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U.S. Department of the Interior**

**House Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Federal Lands**

March 26, 2026

Chairman Tiffany, Ranking Member Neguse, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the Department of the Interior's views on the following legislation: H.R. 6778, the Parkway Safety and Reinvestment Act; H.R. 7618, the American Battlefield Protection Program Amendments Act of 2026; and H.R. 7951 the Long-Term Good Neighbor Authority Act.

H.R. 6778, the Parkway Safety and Reinvestment Act

H.R. 6778 would authorize the National Park Service (NPS) to use automated speed safety cameras on certain park roads and to direct revenue from resulting civil penalties toward the maintenance and construction needs of the unit of the National Park System where the citation is issued. The legislation would establish a new civil penalty framework for the NPS and would require the development of regulations to address penalty tiers, standards of review, and a process for adjudicating civil citations, as the NPS does not maintain an existing civil violation scheme that can be readily adapted for automated enforcement.

The Department supports efforts to enhance public safety, improve traffic management, and address road related infrastructure needs in some of the most heavily visited areas of the National Park System.

The Department notes that the initial acquisition, installation, calibration, and maintenance of speed safety cameras would require upfront spending before any revenue from civil penalties becomes available. Additionally, the requirement to provide responsible parties with notice and an opportunity for a hearing before assessing a civil penalty could require the NPS to spend more money. This may negatively impact the NPS's ability to properly manage roadways and divert funding from other important NPS priorities such as road maintenance. Accordingly, the Department does not support H.R. 6778.

The Department appreciates the Committee's efforts to enhance roadway safety and visitor experience within the National Park System. We look forward to working with the Committee

and the bill sponsor to accomplish these goals in accordance with the President's budget proposal.

H.R. 7618, the American Battlefield Protection Program Amendments Act of 2026

H.R. 7618 would amend provisions of title 54, United States Code, to modify elements of the American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP), including adjustments to cost-share requirements, authorization levels, and the program's overall period of authorization. The bill would also direct the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the National Park Service, to complete new studies related to sites associated with the French and Indian War and the Mexican American War. Finally, HR 7618 would consolidate ABPP Interpretation and Restoration Grants into a single \$2,000,000 per year program.

The Department supports the proposed extension of the authorization for the Battlefield Acquisition Grant Program from 2028 to 2036. Extending this authority would ensure continued progress in partnering with state, local, and private entities to preserve nationally significant battlefields.

The Department does not support increasing the federal cost share from 50 percent to 75 percent. The 50/50 matching requirement has long been a cornerstone of Land and Water Conservation Fund grant programs, reflecting an equitable partnership between federal and nonfederal entities. Increasing the federal share to 75 percent would alter that longstanding balance by reducing the equal investment that has characterized the program's success and could weaken the shared responsibility framework that has guided these grants for decades.

The Department recognizes the significance of the French and Indian War and the Mexican American War in shaping the history of the United States. However, we do not support completing the proposed studies described in section 3. The NPS is currently focusing its resources on addressing other critical needs, including efforts to reduce the deferred maintenance backlog. While we appreciate the meaningful history reflected in the sites associated with these conflicts, undertaking new studies at this time would divert limited resources from higher priority operational responsibilities.

H.R. 7951, the Long-Term Good Neighbor Authority Act

The legislation would amend section 8206 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (16 U.S.C. 2113a) and section 351 of the EXPLORE Act (Public Law No. 118234; 16 U.S.C. 8571) to clarify eligibility under the Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) for Indian tribes and to establish statutory limits on the duration of Good Neighbor Agreements. Under current law, there is no specified period of performance for GNA agreements or contracts. As a result, the period of performance is often based on policy for conventional agreements, which is generally five years.

The Department values its longstanding and productive collaboration with tribal governments and appreciates how the discussion draft would ensure that application of the authority for Indian tribes is clear and consistent. The Department supports these amendments, which would encourage longer-term GNA agreements; this would reduce the administrative burden of renewing short-term agreements with long-term partners in tribal, state, and county governments. The Department would welcome the opportunity to work with the bill sponsor and the Committee on additional refinements that could further support effective and efficient implementation of Good Neighbor Authority.

Chairman Tiffany, that concludes my testimony. I would be pleased to answer any questions about these bills from members of the committee.