



October 31, 2023

Dear Members of Congress,

We, the members of the National Parks Second Century Action Coalition<sup>1</sup>, urge you to oppose the U.S. House of Representatives Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) Transportation, Housing and Urban Development appropriations bill for zeroing out the Nationally Significant Federal Lands and Tribal Lands Projects Program and the National Scenic Byways Program. Both programs provide necessary investments to national parks and to the benefit of millions of visitors that visit them every year.

The over 10,000 miles of publicly accessible roads, 1,440 bridges and other national park transportation systems located on or operating in national parks depend upon federal transportation funding. Much of that infrastructure is in need of repair. The Nationally Significant Federal Lands and Tribal Projects program can help address massive transportation projects in parks. In a recent request for proposals, the National Park Service requested \$800 million for projects throughout the country. Recent projects include replacing the shuttle bus fleet in Zion National Park, supporting the restoration of historic waterflows in Everglades National Park, rehabilitating a section of the Natchez Trace Parkway and replacing miles of road in Yellowstone National Park. The FY24 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development appropriations bill zeroed out the program. **The coalition supports the fully authorized amount of \$300 million in FY24 for the Nationally Significant Federal Lands and Tribal Projects program.**

The U.S. House of Representatives Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) Transportation, Housing and Urban Development appropriations bill also zeroed out the National Scenic Byways Program. The National Scenic Byways Program, managed by the Federal Highways Administration is active in 52 states and territories (including Washington, DC, and Puerto Rico), and the nearly 1,300 state and national scenic byways are all eligible for these funds. The byway designation maximizes federal investments in transportation and infrastructure by tying urban, rural and suburban communities together and serving as an economic development tool and job creator to areas that need it the most. Resources are needed to support the program with competitive grants for states to install interpretive and directional signs and build visitor centers or rest areas.

Several national park roads contain or are adjacent to scenic byways. For example, the Blue Ridge Parkway and George Washington Memorial Parkway are both national parks and national scenic byways. Death Valley Scenic Byway is the main route to and through Death Valley National Park and Great River Road National Byway runs through Vicksburg National Military Park. **The coalition supports funding of \$58 million for the National Scenic Byways Program in the FY24.**

For more than a century, our national parks have remained America’s favorite places, important pieces of our natural and cultural heritage set aside for future generations to explore and enjoy. In 2021, 297 million park visitors spent an estimated \$42.5 billion in local gateway communities while visiting National Park Service sites across the country. These expenditures supported a total of 322,000 jobs. In addition, America’s outdoor recreation economy supports 4.5 million American jobs and contributes over \$862 billion in annual economic output (1.9% of GDP). The outdoor recreation economy grew over three times the rate of the U.S. economy as a whole from 2020-2021 (18.9% compared to 5.7%). In 2021, there were over 22 million international arrivals to the United States and research indicates that national parks were a huge tourism attraction for those visitors. NPS needs the financial resources to ensure both domestic and international visitors have the experience they deserve.

It is critical that Congress provide significant investments to our national parks. **We urge you to oppose the U.S. House of Representatives FY24 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development appropriations bill.**

The 1882 Foundation  
American Hiking Society  
American Society of Landscape Architects  
Appalachian Trail Conservancy  
Atomic Heritage Foundation  
Coalition to Protect America’s National Parks  
The Corps Network  
Friends of Acadia  
Friends of Hawai’i Volcanoes National Park  
Friends of Pu’uhonua O Honaunau National Park  
International Inbound Travel Association  
Mission Heritage Partners  
National Park Hospitality Association  
National Parks Conservation Association  
National Park Partners of Chickamauga, Chattanooga, and Moccasin Bend  
National Park Solutions  
Public Lands Alliance  
Scenic America  
Southeast Tourism Society  
Student Conservation Association  
Timucuan Parks Foundation  
U.S. Travel Association  
Western States Tourism Policy Council

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<sup>i</sup> The National Parks Second Century Action Coalition is made up of organizations supporting conservation, recreation, outdoor industry, travel and tourism and historic preservation that are dedicated to promoting the protection, restoration, and enjoyment of the National Park System for the long-term benefit it offers our nation.