

August 21, 2018

Dear Chairman Bishop and Ranking Member Grijalva:

We write in support of the bipartisan Restore Our Parks and Public Lands Act (H.R. 6510). This important bill addresses one of the most critical issues facing our national parks: the park system's deferred maintenance backlog. Roads, bridges, trails, visitor centers, drinking water systems and more are decaying due to age and a lack of needed capital investments over the decades.

Our national parks and other public lands can provide a place of respite for our military transitioning back to civilian life from participating in outdoor recreation activities to contributing in volunteer opportunities. In addition, the National Park Service preserves and commemorates America's military history. At least 155 park units across the country include national battlefields, military parks, forts, and cemeteries.

The Mission Continues is a non-profit, non-partisan organization that empowers veterans to find growth, purpose and connection through community impact. This summer The Mission Continues partnered with National Parks Conservation Association and National Park Service for its Summer Service Slam. Over the course of one weekend, nearly 100 veteran volunteers throughout the west coast engaged in a series of service projects at World War II Valor in the Pacific National Monument as well as Mt. Rainier, Grand Canyon, and Sequoia/Kings Canyon National Parks. The veterans logged nearly 500 volunteer hours and provided over \$17,500 worth of deferred maintenance to the parks and monument.

The National Park Service's deferred maintenance backlog totals \$11.6 billion dollars. Without repair of these assets, this situation threatens our natural, cultural and military heritage. The park units that encompass aspects of our military history need more than \$6.7 billion in infrastructure repairs. Dedicated funding is needed to address the large scope of the problem.

We appreciate that your bill before Congress dedicates up to \$6.5 billion to the backlog over five years, which would address the majority of the park service's high priority projects. The Mission Continues supports your efforts to ensure final passage of the Restore Our Parks and Public Lands Act (H.R. 6510) in this Congress.

This problem is so important to address for the sake of preserving parks' cultural and natural resources as well as our nation's military history. The Mission Continues stands ready to work with the National Park Service to help complete these repairs.

Thank you for considering this request and for your support for America's national parks.

Sincerely,



Laura L'Esperance
Senior Vice President, External Affairs
The Mission Continues