

STATEMENT OF DANIEL N. WENK, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES, CONCERNING S. 289, A BILL TO ESTABLISH THE JOURNEY THROUGH HALLOWED GROUND NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

March 20, 2007

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to appear before your committee to present the views of the Department of the Interior on S. 289, a bill to establish the Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area.

While a national heritage area feasibility study by the Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership has found the Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area appropriate for designation, we recommend that the committee defer action on S. 289 and all other proposed heritage area designations until program legislation is enacted that establishes guidelines and a process for the designation of national heritage areas. Last year, the Administration sent to Congress a legislative proposal to establish guidelines and a process for designation. Bills were introduced in the 109th Congress (S. 243, H.R. 760 and H.R. 6287) that incorporated the majority of the provisions of the Administration's proposal, and S. 243 passed the Senate. During the 110th Congress, a similar heritage area program bill, S. 278, has been introduced, and we look forward to continuing to work with Congress on this very important issue.

With 37 national heritage areas designated across 27 states, and more heritage area legislative proposals in the pipeline, the Administration believes it is critical at this

juncture for Congress to enact national heritage area program legislation. This legislation would provide a much-needed framework for evaluating proposed national heritage areas, offering guidelines for successful planning and management, clarifying the roles and responsibilities of all parties, and standardizing timeframes and funding for designated areas. Program legislation also would clarify the expectation that heritage areas would work toward self-sufficiency by outlining the necessary steps, including appropriate planning, to achieve that shared goal.

The proposed Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area would span a region of approximately 175 miles along Route 15 and part of Route 20, from Gettysburg, Pennsylvania through Maryland and West Virginia to Charlottesville, Virginia. The region is rich in historic and natural resources including the homes of Presidents Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, James Monroe, and Dwight David Eisenhower, and includes significant Revolutionary and Civil War sites. Revolutionary War sites include Willow Grove, the temporary headquarters of Generals Wayne and Muhlenberg; Point of Fork Arsenal; Castle Hill, home of colonial leader Dr. Thomas Walker; and the Hessian Barracks, used as a prison for British soldiers. Civil War sites include the battlefields of Gettysburg, Monocacy, Antietam, Brandy Station, and Chancellorsville, among others. The region is also crossed by numerous historic trails and byways relating to the Civil War and other scenic resources. All told, there are an estimated 7,000 buildings in the area listed on the National Register of Historic Places, 13 National Historic Landmarks, and two World Heritage Sites.

S. 289 would establish the Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area and designate the Partnership as the management entity. The Partnership is a nonprofit corporation that has conducted a significant number of public meetings, an important requirement for evaluating local support for the designation of a national heritage area. The bill prescribes the duties of the management entity, requires the development of a management plan by the Partnership to be approved by the Secretary, and includes a 15-year authorization for up to \$1 million dollars per year not to exceed a total of \$10 million. As this proposed heritage area would transverse four states, we strongly encourage the Partnership to represent the interests of all four states.

If the committee chooses to move forward with this bill, the Department would like to work with the committee on some technical corrections to the bill. In addition, the Department would recommend that the bill be amended to include an additional requirement for an evaluation to be conducted by the Secretary, three years prior to the cessation of federal funding under this act. The evaluation would examine the accomplishments of the heritage area in meeting the goals of the management plan; analyze the leveraging and impact of investments to the heritage area; identify the critical components of the management structure and sustainability of the heritage area; and recommend what future role, if any, the National Park Service should have with respect to the heritage area.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my testimony and I am prepared to answer any questions that you or other members of the committee might have at this time.