

STATEMENT OF DANIEL N. WENK, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES, CONCERNING S. 916 AND H.R. 161, BILLS PROVIDING FOR THE ADDITION OF THE JAPANESE AMERICAN MEMORIAL AT BAINBRIDGE ISLAND, WASHINGTON, TO MINIDOKA INTERNMENT NATIONAL MONUMENT AND THE CONVEYANCE OF THE GOODING DIVISION OF THE MINIDOKA PROJECT.

May 15, 2007

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to provide the Department of the Interior's views on S. 916 and H.R. 161. Both bills would authorize the addition of the *Nidoto Nai Yoni* Memorial on Bainbridge Island, Washington to the boundary of the Minidoka Internment National Monument in Idaho. S. 916 would also authorize the conveyance of certain facilities, buildings and lands of the Gooding Division of the Minidoka Project in Idaho to the American Falls Reservoir District #2.

The Department supports the goals of both S. 916 and H.R. 161.

Minidoka Internment National Monument, in southern Idaho, was established by Presidential Proclamation in 2001 to provide opportunities for public education and interpretation of the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. It is one of two units (the other being Manzanar National Historic Site in California) where the National Park Service documents and describes the experiences of the almost 120,000 Japanese Americans who were forced from their homes on the West Coast and in southern Arizona during World War II under Executive Order 9066. Most spent the next

three years in one of ten “relocation centers” across the country run by the War Relocation Authority. More than 13,000 Japanese Americans were incarcerated at the Minidoka Relocation Center, which was in operation from August 10, 1942 to October 28, 1945.

H.R. 161, which was passed by the House on February 6, 2007, and Title I of S. 916 would include the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Memorial in Washington in the boundary of the Minidoka Internment National Monument. The legislation would implement the recommendations of the study that the National Park Service conducted in accordance with Public Law 107-363, the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Memorial Study Act of 2002.

The official name of the Japanese American memorial is “*Nidoto Nai Yoni*,” which means “let it not happen again.” It commemorates the Bainbridge Island residents who were the first group of Japanese Americans to be forcibly removed from their homes and relocated to internment camps. On the morning of March 30, 1942, 227 Bainbridge Island Nikkei were assembled at the Eagledale Ferry Dock on Bainbridge Island and transported to Seattle, where they were placed on a train that sent them to the Owens Valley Reception Center located at Manzanar, California. Most subsequently requested transfer to the Minidoka Relocation Center to join other Nikkei being sent there from Seattle, Portland, and other Pacific Northwest areas. The addition of the Bainbridge Island Memorial to the Minidoka Internment National Monument would make this direct

connection between the two sites, and provide more context and depth to the broader story of Japanese American internment.

The *Nidoto Nai Yoni* Memorial site consists of approximately 8 acres of land owned by the City of Bainbridge Island, Washington. Under S. 916 and H.R. 161, as called for by the National Park Service's study, the site would be managed through a partnership arrangement between the National Park Service and other public and private entities, and costs would be shared among the partners. The estimate for the one-time cost to the National Park Service for development is \$350,000 to \$400,000 for facility construction and interpretive media, using a 50/50 match with non-federal partners. Additionally, the National Park Service would contribute to the operational costs for the site by funding one permanent and up to three seasonal interpretive employees at an annual cost of up to \$200,000 included in Minidoka Internment National Monument's operating budget. The principal role of the National Park Service at the *Nidoto Nai Yoni* Memorial site would be in the area of public interpretation and education.

Title II of S. 916 would authorize the title transfer of federally owned facilities, buildings, and lands that are part of the Gooding Division of the Minidoka Project from the Bureau of Reclamation to the American Falls Reservoir District #2.

Reclamation law and policy contemplate the transfer of projects to local entities where and when such transfer is appropriate. In 1995, the Bureau of Reclamation began an effort to facilitate the transfer of title to Reclamation projects and facilities in a consistent

and comprehensive way. Reclamation developed a process known as the *Framework for the Transfer of Title* - a process whereby interested non-federal entities would work with and through Reclamation to identify and address all of the issues that would enable the title transfer to move forward. Once completed, Reclamation and the entity interested in taking title would work with the Congress to gain the necessary authorization for such a title transfer. In the case of the transfer authorized by this bill, Reclamation and the American Falls Reservoir District #2 have worked collaboratively and efficiently to successfully address all the elements of Reclamation's title transfer policy framework.

One of the Administration's goals in title transfer is to protect the financial interest of the United States. In this case, the full costs of all facilities, buildings, and acquired lands to be transferred, including its central feature, the Milner-Gooding Canal, have already been repaid pursuant to the District's amendatory repayment contract. The District has also identified some withdrawn lands for which they would like to gain title and have agreed to pay the fair market appraised value for these lands. There are no ongoing revenue streams associated with the facilities, buildings, and lands. Because the District has fulfilled its repayment obligation under its contract, payment is required only for the additional withdrawn lands that the District has proposed for title transfer.

While the focus of Title II is the transfer of the Reclamation facilities to the American Falls Reservoir District #2, it also directs Reclamation to transfer title for specific smaller parcels to the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the State of Idaho, and the City of Gooding, since those entities currently manage the relevant lands.

Reclamation has worked closely with the National Park Service and the other entities to craft the language that appears in the transfer agreement.

Two of the smaller parcels, equaling 10.18 acres, would be added to the boundary of Minidoka Internment National Monument, as called for in the monument's recently approved General Management Plan (GMP). The smaller parcel is located in the historic warehouse area and contains three buildings from the historic period as well as numerous warehouse foundations. This area would be used as the primary site for visitor orientation and information. An existing historic warehouse would be adapted to serve as a visitor contact station and central trailhead for visitor self-guided walking tours. The larger parcel on the east end of the national monument was part of the original Relocation Center and was never developed. It would be used as an overflow parking area and for special events.

The reason the smaller parcel was not included in the original boundary for the Minidoka Internment National Monument is because the American Falls Reservoir District #2 occupied the buildings. After the monument was established, however, the National Park Service, Reclamation, and American Falls Reservoir District #2 entered into an agreement to move the District's operations to a site outside the national monument's boundary, and that relocation is now nearly complete. The National Park Service has obligated \$250,000 to the Bureau of Reclamation for relocation costs. The payment of \$52,996 that S. 916 provides for Reclamation to make to the District represents the final portion of the agreed-upon payment that originated with the National Park Service.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my testimony. We would be pleased to work with the Committee and the sponsors of S. 916 and H.R. 161 as the legislation moves forward. I would be happy to answer any questions you or other members of the Committee may have.