

STATEMENT OF STEPHANIE TOOTHMAN, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, CULTURAL RESOURCES, PARTNERSHIPS, AND SCIENCE, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS OF THE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE, CONCERNING S. 1328, TO AUTHORIZE THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR TO CONDUCT A SPECIAL RESOURCE STUDY OF THE ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE AND SURROUNDING LAND OF THE NEW PHILADELPHIA TOWN SITE IN THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

July 31, 2013

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to provide the Department of the Interior's views on S. 1328, a bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of the archeological site, and surrounding land of the New Philadelphia town site in the State of Illinois, and for other purposes.

The Department supports enactment of S. 1328. However, we believe that priority should be given to the 30 previously authorized studies for potential units of the National Park System, potential new National Heritage Areas, and potential additions to the National Trails System and National Wild and Scenic River System that have not yet been transmitted to the Congress.

S. 1328 authorizes a special resource study to evaluate the national significance of the New Philadelphia, Illinois town site and to determine the suitability and feasibility of designating the archaeological site and the surrounding land as a unit of the National Park System. The bill directs the Secretary, in the course of the resource study, to also consider other alternatives for the preservation, protection and interpretation of the archeological site of New Philadelphia, Illinois and the surrounding land by Federal, State or local government entities, private nonprofit organizations or any other interested individuals. We estimate the cost of the resource study to range from \$200,000 to \$300,000, based on similar types of studies conducted in recent years.

The New Philadelphia town site, located near Barry, Illinois, was founded in 1836 by Frank McWhorter, an enslaved man from Kentucky, who bought his own freedom and the freedom of 15 family members. New Philadelphia is the first known town platted and officially registered by an African-American before the Civil War. The rural community situated near the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers flourished at first, but later fell into decline when the railroad bypassed the community in 1869; it was eventually dissolved in 1885. The New Philadelphia town site is a 42-acre archeological site with no visible above-ground evidence. It was designated a National Historic Landmark on January 16, 2009.

In 2012, the National Park Service completed a reconnaissance survey of the New Philadelphia town site. The survey found that the site is nationally significant and would likely meet the criteria for suitability to be added to the National Park System. The survey also found, however, that the New Philadelphia town site is not likely to be feasible for addition to the National Park System due to the challenges of providing for public enjoyment, including associated operation and staffing costs. However, a special resource study also would examine alternatives to

National Park Service management for the preservation and interpretation of the New Philadelphia town site.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my prepared statement. I would be happy to answer any questions that you or other committee members may have regarding this bill.