

STATEMENT OF VICTOR KNOX, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, PARK PLANNING, FACILITIES AND LANDS, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON PUBLIC LANDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATION OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, CONCERNING H. R. 1501, TO STUDY THE SUITABILITY AND FEASIBILITY OF DESIGNATING THE PRISON SHIP MARTYRS' MONUMENT IN FORT GREENE PARK, IN THE NEW YORK CITY BOROUGH OF BROOKLYN, AS A UNIT OF THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM.

February 26, 2014

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to provide the Department of the Interior's views on H.R. 1501, a bill to study the suitability and feasibility of designating the Prison Ship Martyrs' Monument in Fort Greene Park, in the New York City borough of Brooklyn, as a unit of the National Park System.

The Department supports enactment of H.R. 1501 with a technical amendment. However, we believe that priority should be given to the 27 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 Rivers System that have not yet been transmitted to the Congress.

H.R. 1501 authorizes a special resource study of the Prison Ship Martyrs' Monument. This study would determine whether this site meets the National Park Service's criteria for inclusion in the National Park System of national significance, suitability, and feasibility, and need for National Park Service management. The study would also consider other alternatives for preservation, protection, and interpretation of the resources. We estimate the cost of the study to range from \$100,000 to \$200,000, based on similar types of studies conducted in recent years. The Prison Ship Martyrs' Monument commemorates the sacrifice of over 11,000 patriots who died while incarcerated in British prison ships anchored off Brooklyn during the American Revolution. The monument was constructed in 1908 and is located in Fort Greene Park. Designed by the architect Stanford White and set in a landscape designed by the landscape architects Calvert Vaux and Frederick Law Olmstead, it is 149 feet tall and constructed of granite. Prominent sculptural elements were executed by Adolph Alexander Weinman. The monument's base includes a crypt containing some the remains of the prisoners recovered from the Brooklyn waterfront in the nineteenth century. Also, Fort Greene Park was the location of American fortifications during the Battle of Long Island which has been classified as a "Class A Battlefield Commemorative Property" in the National Park Service *Report to Congress on the Historic Preservation of Revolutionary War and War of 1812 Sites in the United States*, dated September 2007.

Construction of the monument was funded jointly by the federal government and the City of New York; it is currently owned by the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation. Both the monument and Fort Greene Park are contributing resources to the Fort Greene Historic District that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

We recommend a technical amendment to section 1(b)(2) as follows:

On page 2, strike lines 8 – 10 and insert the following:

“8(c) of the National Park System General Authorities Act (16 U.S.C. 1a-5(c)) shall apply to the study.”.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes our prepared statement. I would be happy to respond to any questions about this matter.