

**STATEMENT OF VICTOR KNOX, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, PARK PLANNING, FACILITIES AND LANDS, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES, CONCERNING S. 521, TO AUTHORIZE THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR TO CONDUCT A SPECIAL RESOURCE STUDY OF PRESIDENT STATION IN BALTIMORE, MARYLAND, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.**

**June 10, 2015**

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Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to provide the Department of the Interior's views on S. 521, to conduct a special resource study of President Station in Baltimore, Maryland, and for other purposes.

The Department supports enactment of S. 521 with technical amendments. However, we believe that priority should be given to the 33 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 Congress.

S. 521 authorizes a special resource study of the President Street Station in Baltimore, Maryland. 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 by the Federal government, State or local government entities, or private and non-profit entities. Alternatives might include, for example, the designation of the site as an affiliated area of the National Park Service, where the National Park Service would provide technical assistance to the site but not own or manage it. We estimate the cost of the study to range from \$200,000 to \$300,000, based on similar types of studies conducted in recent years.

The President Street Station was built by the Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Baltimore Railroad. Opened in 1850, it served as the company's passenger terminus with connections south to the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad terminal via horse-drawn track through the City of Baltimore. Originally consisting of a headhouse, a 208-foot long barrel vaulted train shed, and a freight house, only the headhouse remains today. The property is associated with the Baltimore Riot of 1861, where members of the Massachusetts militia on their way to Washington were attacked by a mob as they transited the city, resulting in the deaths of four soldiers and twelve civilians. That event is considered the first act in the Civil War in which blood was shed. The station is also recognized by the National Park Service's Network to Freedom program for its use by the General Vigilance Committee Anti-Slavery Society in Philadelphia, as well as other groups and individuals, to escape or aid others in escaping slavery.

President Street Station is owned by the City of Baltimore. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is included in the Baltimore National Heritage Area. It houses the Baltimore Civil War Museum which is operated by a state-chartered organization, the Friends of President Street Station, and is open to the public.

We recommend two technical amendments, which are attached below: one to update the reference to the law that set requirements for special resource studies; the other to correct the name of the train station in the title of the bill.

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

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**Proposed amendments to S. 521, President Street Station Special Resource Study**

On page 3, lines 5-6, strike “section 8 of Public Law 91-383 (16 U.S.C. 1a-5)” and insert “section 100507 of title 54, United States Code”.

Amend the title to read: “To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of President Street Station in Baltimore, Maryland, and for other purposes.”.