

# Restore America's Parks

October 11, 2019

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
U.S. Capitol Building, Room S-230  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House of Representatives  
United States House of Representatives  
U.S. Capitol Building, Room 232  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader McConnell and Speaker Pelosi:

We are elected leaders of cities, towns, and counties that are adjacent to national park sites. The preservation of these sites is critical to the health of our local economies. That is why we urge you to advance legislation, S. 500 and H.R. 1225, that would dedicate federal funding for their repair. As you may know, the National Park System has a nearly \$12 billion deferred maintenance backlog that affects the upkeep of historic artifacts and buildings, water systems, roads and trails, and many visitor facilities.

As gateways to national parks, we understand first-hand the economic importance of sustaining these special places in ways that attract visitation and tourism. Our communities provide the lodging, gas, food establishments, and other amenities that tourists require before, during, and after their park visits. According to the National Park Service, in 2018, the 318 million visitors to national parks contributed more than \$40 billion in national economic output, which supported 329,000 jobs. Those jobs are economic lifelines for many of our residents.

We are proud neighbors and partners of America's national parks and understand the important roles these places play in protecting and providing access to our natural and cultural heritage. We need to repair and maintain these cherished sites, not only for the economic benefits they supply, but to keep intact our National Park System, which historian Wallace Stegner called "America's best idea." Please provide your leadership in guiding S. 500 and H.R. 1225 through to final passage.

Sincerely,

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Lamar Tidwell, Mayor, Ecorse  
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