



January 3, 2018

Honorable Lisa Murkowski, Chair  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Murkowski:

As National President of the National Treasury Employees Union, I represent over 150,000 federal employees in 32 agencies including at the National Park Service (NPS). My NPS members have asked me to request your help in stopping the Department of Interior's plan to substantially increase entrance fees for many of our most popular parks.

We acknowledge that the Park Service has an enormous backlog of deferred maintenance, but to place that burden on families who use the parks for vacations or hiking seems egregious. Last year, our parks attracted 331 million visitors. Doubling the fee increases, or more, during peak visiting season at our most highly-visited parks will result in fewer visitors, not because the sites are not compelling and beautiful, but because they will no longer be within reach of the average American family's finances. I believe that you feel as my members do – that our national parks should be available to everyone, not just the wealthy.

While NTEU applauds attention being given to the NPS' aged infrastructure needs, the right way to handle the maintenance backlog is for Congress to allocate money in a fund dedicated to addressing the backlog. The current fee proposal would establish a maintenance financing system predicated on funding disparities between highly-visited and less visited parks which is also of further concern.

Please let me know that you will seek to stop the increased fees and develop a more reasonable proposal to address the NPS' deferred maintenance crisis. NTEU's NPS members remain strongly committed to seeing our parks remain accessible to all.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony M. Reardon". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Anthony M. Reardon  
National President