

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. 1071, A BILL TO AUTHORIZE THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR TO MAKE IMPROVEMENTS TO SUPPORT FACILITIES FOR NATIONAL HISTORIC SITES OPERATED BY THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

July 31, 2013

Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the views of the Department on S. 1071, a bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior (Secretary) to make improvements to support facilities for National Historic Sites operated by the National Park Service (NPS), and for other purposes.

The Department could only support this legislation if amended to apply specifically to Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site. The bill as introduced would apply to any national historic site that meets certain criteria. We are only aware of one site, Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site, to which this bill could apply. We believe it is better for Congress to provide specific authority to individual parks on a case-by-case basis, rather than to appear to provide broad authority that only applies to one unit of the National Park System and that could have unintended consequences.

This legislation would authorize the Secretary to make improvements to a non-Federal support facility, including a visitor center, at a national historic site operated by the NPS if the project is: (1) conducted using amounts included in the budget of the NPS in effect on the date on which the project is authorized; (2) subject to a 50 percent non-federal cost-sharing requirement; and (3) conducted in an area in which the NPS was authorized by law in effect before the date of enactment of this Act to establish a support facility.

This bill would only allow the NPS to use existing funds to make improvements to support facilities at national historic sites that meet these criteria at the time that the bill is enacted. The bill would not authorize any new appropriations, and Federal spending would not increase as a result of the enactment of this legislation.

S. 1071 would also authorize the Secretary to operate and use all or part of such a support facility to carry out duties associated with operating and supporting the national historic site, but only in accordance with an agreement between the Secretary and the unit of local government in which the support facility is located.

This legislation would allow national historic sites that meet the bill's criteria to partner with State and local governments to leverage non-Federal funding to improve facilities that are mutually beneficial to the National Park Service and to the local community. For example, Kiowa County, Colorado, purchased a historic building in 2007. They plan to use a portion of

this building as a senior citizens center. The remainder of the building would be an ideal location for a visitor center and administrative facility for the nearby Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site. The local community has already raised matching funds for renovations, and would like to partner with the NPS to make improvements to the building so that it can be used as both an NPS facility and a senior citizens center for the local community.

The Department recognizes the need to use Federal funds responsibly and we believe that national parks should, on a case-by-case basis, be authorized and allowed to partner with State and local governments to make capital investments in a non-Federally owned building that directly benefits the park, the local community, and the American people. In this case, allowing the NPS to partner with Kiowa County to make improvements to this support facility would provide much needed facilities for the park. In other cases, however, NPS could be expected to use its limited capital improvement resources for improvements that do not directly benefit the park.

The legislation that established Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site (Pub. L. 106-465) authorizes a support facility to be located outside the park boundary, in Kiowa County, Colorado. We urge the committee to amend that provision to allow Federal funds to be used to make improvements to a facility for that purpose. We would be happy to work with the committee to develop the appropriate amendments.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my testimony. I would be happy to answer any questions you or any other members of the subcommittee may have.