

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. 1157, A BILL TO REAUTHORIZE THE RIVERS OF STEEL NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA, THE LACKAWANNA VALLEY NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA, THE DELAWARE AND LEHIGH NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR, AND THE SCHUYLKILL RIVER VALLEY NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA.

JULY 31, 2013

Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the views of the Department of the Interior on S. 1157, a bill to reauthorize the Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area, the Lackawanna Valley National Heritage Area, the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor, and the Schuylkill River Valley National Heritage Area.

The Department recognizes the important work of the four national heritage areas to preserve historic, cultural, natural, and recreational resources in Pennsylvania. We recommend that S. 1157 be amended to authorize an extension for heritage area program funding until we have completed an evaluation and report on the accomplishments of the national heritage areas and the future role of the National Park Service; and until program legislation is enacted that standardizes timeframes and funding for designated national heritage areas. Consistent with congressional directives in the 2009 and 2010 Interior Appropriations Acts, the Administration proposed, in the FY 2014 budget, focusing most national heritage area grants on recently authorized areas. The Department would like to work with Congress to determine the future federal role when national heritage areas reach the end of their authorized eligibility for national heritage program funding. We recommend that Congress enact national heritage area legislation during this Congress.

There are currently 49 designated national heritage areas, yet there is no authority in law that guides the designation and administration of these areas. Program legislation would provide a much-needed framework for evaluating proposed national heritage areas, offering guidelines for successful planning and management, clarifying the roles and responsibilities of all parties, and standardizing timeframes and funding for designated areas.

All four areas have lengthy records of leadership and accomplishment. All four are recognized for their important histories and rich and distinctive historic and natural resources. At each, numerous partner organizations and local, state, and federal agencies work together through the singular opportunity for collaboration that the national heritage area model provides. Each area developed a thoughtful plan with the community and has made enormous strides in saving historic resources, developing trails, preserving open space, building community pride, enhancing education, and promoting economic development that responds to these essential elements of their quality of life.

Created by Public Law 104-333 in 1996, the Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area (Rivers of Steel) is made up of eight counties in southwestern Pennsylvania known for their significant contributions to the steel industry in America. The mission of Rivers of Steel is to preserve and interpret the history of the region and share the dynamic story of the evolution of southwestern Pennsylvania from a small colonial settlement to the flourishing of the steel industry in the area.

The Lackawanna Valley National Heritage Area (Lackawanna) was established by Public Law 106-278 in 2000. The Lackawanna includes four counties in northeastern Pennsylvania with historical ties to the anthracite coal industry. These counties preserve nationally distinctive resources related to Pennsylvania and America's industrial history, including the history of major labor unions and the struggle to improve working conditions of mine workers. The architecture, ethnic traditions, and infrastructure of the anthracite region tell the story of the Lackawanna Valley and its role in the industrial development of the United States. The mission of the Lackawanna is to conserve, interpret, and develop the historical, cultural, natural, recreational, and economic development resources associated with the area's significant history.

The Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor (Delaware and Lehigh) was established by Public Law 100-692 in 1988, the third National Heritage Area created by Congress. The 150-mile spine of the Delaware and Lehigh is the historic Delaware Canal and Lehigh Navigation Canal through five counties in eastern Pennsylvania. The Delaware and Lehigh commemorates the historic routes of rivers, canals, and railroads—and the people and communities involved—that brought anthracite coal from the mines to market in the early nineteenth century, fostering the development of vibrant towns and culture. The purpose of the Delaware and Lehigh is to provide an integrated management structure that facilitates preservation, recreation, education, and economic development.

The Schuylkill River Valley National Heritage Area (Schuylkill River Valley) was established by Public Law 106-278 in 2000. The Schuylkill River Valley conserves, interprets, and develops the historical, cultural, natural, recreational, and economic resources related to the heritage of the area, encompassing five counties in southeastern Pennsylvania, including Philadelphia. The area is rich in Revolutionary War history, and the anthracite, charcoal, iron, and textile industries of the region grew here.

The bedrock of the national heritage area concept has always been building partnerships for achieving goals. All four of these non-profit national heritage areas, with government funding assistance since their establishment, have shown significant success in working with partners and the federal government to preserve, interpret, and promote the significant resources in their local areas. In total, Lackawanna has received approximately \$6.7 million in Federal funding, Rivers of Steel has received about \$13.4 million in Federal funding, Delaware and Lehigh has received almost \$12.7 million, and Schuylkill River Valley has received nearly \$5.9 million in Federal funding, and every federal dollar has been matched at least once with non-federal funds.

S. 1157, as drafted, would extend the authorization for federal funding for these four heritage areas for an additional ten years. Currently, the Evaluation and Report required by Public Law 110-229 is being completed for Rivers of Steel and we anticipate the evaluation will be transmitted to Congress this year. The NPS and the Delaware and Lehigh completed an evaluation for the Delaware and Lehigh; however, this evaluation did not include

recommendations on what the future role of the National Park Service should be in the area. The National Park Service will take another look at the evaluation and include recommendations on the future role of the National Park Service prior to transmitting it to Congress in order to be consistent with the other reports.

We recommend a technical amendment to the long title of the bill to make it clear that the bill would extend the authorization for federal funding for the four heritage areas instead of reauthorizing the heritage areas. While the four heritage areas face a sunset date for their federal funding, their national heritage area designation will not sunset.

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