

STATEMENT OF MICHAEL CALDWELL, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, PARK PLANNING, FACILITIES, AND LANDS, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SENATE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, CONCERNING S. 4371, A BILL TO ESTABLISH THE CÉSAR E. CHÁVEZ AND THE FARMWORKER MOVEMENT NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK IN THE STATES OF CALIFORNIA AND ARIZONA, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

SEPTEMBER 21, 2022

Chairman King, Ranking Member Daines, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the Department of the Interior's views on S.4371, a bill to establish the César E. Chávez and the Farmworker Movement National Historical Park in the states of California and Arizona, and for other purposes.

The Department supports S. 4371 with amendments.

S. 4371 would establish the César E. Chávez and the Farmworker Movement National Historical Park, to include the existing César E. Chávez National Monument in Keene, California; The Forty Acres in Delano, California; and the Santa Rita Center in Phoenix, Arizona. It would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to add McDonnell Hall in San Jose, California to the national historical park upon agreement with the property owner, as well as other representative sites. S. 4371 would also establish the Farmworker Peregrinacion National Historic Trail to trace the route of the farmworkers' momentous 300-mile march from Delano to Sacramento, California in 1966.

César E. Chávez National Monument was established by Presidential Proclamation 8884 on October 8, 2012, to preserve, interpret, and commemorate the collective struggles and achievements of the farm worker movement, associated historic resources, and the life and legacy of César E. Chávez. The site was also designated a National Historic Landmark in 2012.

The César E. Chávez National Monument is on the 116-acre property known as "La Paz," which served as headquarters, residence, and training center for the United Farm Workers (UFW) beginning in 1971. The site continues to serve as the headquarters of the UFW and the César Chávez Foundation. The site includes the home of César and Helen Chávez, a memorial garden where they are buried and martyrs to the farmworker movement are honored, and a visitor center in the former UFW administration building, which includes exhibits and César Chávez's office and original furnishings. In managing the César E. Chávez National Monument, the National Park Service (NPS) works closely with the National Chávez Center of the César Chávez Foundation.

The Forty Acres property was acquired by the Farmworkers Service Center in 1966. This organization and its successors proceeded to build a service station, multipurpose hall, health clinic, and retirement housing. César Chávez conducted his 1968 fast in the service station building, and his 1988 fast in the retirement village. The UFW Organizing Committee was

headquartered at The Forty Acres from 1969-71, and the contracts that ended the 1965-70 strike against Delano-area growers were signed here. Many public events and rallies were based at the Forty Acres. As a property purchased, built, and used by farm workers, The Forty Acres embodies the farm labor movement itself. The Forty Acres was designated a National Historic Landmark in 2008. Owned and managed by the César Chávez Foundation, it continues to function as a UFW field office and a site for special events.

The Santa Rita Center was built by the nearby Catholic parish around 1960 as a classroom and community hall. César Chávez's fast at the Santa Rita Center in 1972 focused national attention on farm workers and their organized protest against restrictive legislation, and it invigorated two social movements—the Chicano movement and the farm labor movement. Thousands of Arizona farm workers, and influential supporters such as Coretta Scott King, came to the Santa Rita Center to participate in rallies, celebrate nightly Masses, give voice to the movement's newly adopted slogan “Si Se Puede!” and pledge their support for La Causa. The building is owned by Chicanos Por La Causa, is now surrounded largely by vacant and industrial properties, and is occasionally used for special meetings and events.

McDonnell Hall is the parish hall associated with Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in San Jose, California, and is the primary site from which César Chávez, Father Donald McDonnell, and community organizer Fred Ross served, organized, and educated farmworkers, and conducted the work of the Community Services Organization in the 1950s. The site was used for farmworker organizing activities into the 1970s. It continues to be associated with the church and was designated a National Historic Landmark in 2016.

In 2013, the NPS completed a special resource study to determine if sites significant in the life of César Chávez and the farm labor movement met the criteria for inclusion in the national park system. The selected alternative for the study included La Paz, The Forty Acres, the Santa Rita Center, and McDonnell Hall in the proposed national historical park concept, noting that most sites would remain in their existing ownership and management would occur through cooperative agreements and partnerships.

While the Department supports S. 4371, we recommend amending the bill in the following areas:

First, S. 4371 directs the Cesar E. Chavez National Monument to be administered as a distinct and identifiable unit of the NPS within the boundaries of the Cesar E. Chavez and the Farmworker Movement National Historical Park. The Department notes this would be unusual, poses operations challenges, and could be confusing to the visiting public. The Department recommends fully incorporating the existing monument within the proposed national historical park.

Second, S. 4371 directs the Secretary to prepare a general management plan for the park that includes a determination of whether there are additional sites that were reviewed in the 2013 study that should be added to the national historical park and authorizes the Secretary to incorporate those additional sites into the park with consent of the owner and publishing notice in the Federal Register. The Department believes that rather than providing the Secretary the

authority to add sites or areas to the park administratively, it would be more appropriate for Congress to add the sites after the NPS submits its recommendations to Congress.

Finally, S. 4371 would establish the Farmworker Peregrinacion National Historic Trail. The march this trail represents was a milestone event in the history of the farm labor movement.

More than 100 men and women set out from Delano on March 17, 1966, and thousands of farm workers and their families joined in for short stretches along the way. The march route passed through 42 cities and towns of the San Joaquin Valley, as well as vast stretches of the agricultural landscape. By the time the marchers entered Sacramento on Easter Sunday, April 10, 1966, thousands of people had joined them, and the farm worker movement had secured a contract and attracted new waves of support from across the country.

In the 2013 study, the NPS only conducted a preliminary analysis of the march route's potential for designation as a national historic trail. The study found the march route to be nationally significant but noted there are other criteria to evaluate for national historic trails and specifically recommended that the feasibility of a national historic trail be further explored. We recommend the bill be amended to provide for a full trail study which would be submitted to Congress, rather than a designation, so that Congress would have the benefit of knowing whether the trail meets the statutory criteria for national historic trail designation before acting on this proposal.

The Department would like to work with the bill's sponsor and the Committee on recommended amendments as described in this statement.

Chairman King, this concludes my statement. I would be pleased to answer any questions you or other members of the Subcommittee may have.