

**STATEMENT OF CHRISTINA GOLDFUSS, DEPUTY DIRECTOR,  
CONGRESSIONAL AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS, 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. 2221, A BILL TO EXTEND THE AUTHORIZATION  
FOR THE AUTOMOBILE NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA IN MICHIGAN.**

**July 23, 2014**

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Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the views of the Department of the Interior on S. 2221, a bill to extend the authorization for the Automobile National Heritage Area in Michigan.

The Department recognizes the important work of the MotorCities National Heritage Area Partnership in preserving, interpreting and promoting the automotive and labor heritage of Michigan. We recommend that S. 2221 be amended to authorize an extension for heritage area program funding until such time as the National Park Service (NPS) has completed an evaluation and report on the accomplishments of the area and the future role of the NPS; and until national heritage area (NHA) program legislation is enacted that standardizes timeframes and funding for designated national heritage areas. Because the sunset date for the authorization of funding for the MotorCities NHA is September 30, 2014, the FY 2015 Budget proposes a one-year extension (through FY 2015).

The NPS is initiating phase-in of a funding formula for NHAs, which is a merit-based system for allocating heritage area funding that considers a variety of factors based upon criteria related to program goals, accountability, and organizational sustainability. When fully implemented, the performance-based funding formula plan will reward NHA entities that bring in additional non-Federal investment and that have developed a sustainability plan. 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 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 as a national system. Program legislation would provide a much-needed framework for the evaluation of proposed national heritage areas, offer guidelines for successful planning and management, clarify the roles and responsibilities of all parties, and standardize timeframes and funding for designated areas.

S. 2221, as introduced, would extend the authorization of federal funding for the Automobile National Heritage Area for an additional 16 years until September 30, 2030. The Automobile NHA was designated in 1998 by Public Law 105-355 to preserve the cultural and historic landscapes associated with the automobile in Southeastern and Central Michigan. The NHA covers 10,000 square miles and includes portions of 16 counties, and 250 townships and municipalities, in southeast and central Michigan. The mission of this NHA is focused on raising awareness and understanding about the impact of the automobile on this region with an emphasis on increasing tourism, expanding education and encouraging revitalization. This is

accomplished through voluntary partnerships with communities and citizens, and local, state, and federal agencies emphasizing public access, economic development, regional planning and interpretive programs that highlight the role of auto and labor history in the region.

We also recommend a technical amendment to the bill that would allow the name of the heritage area to reflect the common parlance of MotorCities NHA, rather than Automobile NHA. Public Law 105-355 designated the Automobile National Heritage Area and the Automobile National Heritage Area Partnership as the management entity for the NHA. In subsequent years, the management entity has been renamed the MotorCities National Heritage Area Partnership. An amendment to change the name of the heritage area to reflect the name of the management entity would eliminate the dual names used for the heritage area.

During its 16 years of existence, the MotorCities National Heritage Area Partnership has a significant record of achievement and, with government funding assistance since its establishment, has shown significant success in working with partners and the federal government to preserve, interpret, and promote the significant resources of the local communities within the region. In total, the NHA has received over \$6.3 million in federal funding, and every federal dollar has been matched at least once with non-federal funds and in-kind services.

The MotorCities National Heritage Area partnership has undertaken preservation, education and tourism initiatives to great success. It has worked with its partners to save the Ford Piquette Avenue Plant, the birthplace of the Model T automobile. Once semi-abandoned and threatened with demolition, today Henry Ford's 1906 automotive factory stands and interprets the story of the first affordable automobile for Americans. This National Historic Landmark is open for tours and events. In order to build an understanding of the interconnected stories of the MotorCities NHA, the group has begun a Wayside Exhibit program to create a comprehensive system of approximately 250 outdoor exhibits in communities throughout central and southeastern Michigan that connect the auto and labor history of the region. Done in partnership with a seven year grant from the Federal Highway Administration Department of Transportation and Michigan's Department of Transportation, the signage will commemorate the shared automotive heritage and increase public awareness of the interrelated sites within the NHA to locals and visitors alike. The Heritage Area understands that tourism is a driving economic factor within the region and has been working on a tourism collaboration effort called "Autopalozza" with their state partners at the State Travel Michigan and the Detroit Convention and Visitors Bureau. This umbrella group functions to promote the various major, special, automotive attractions that are particular to the State of Michigan. With innovative partnerships like this, the NHA reaches a much broader audience for visitors, and exposes the heritage area to a national audience.

The management entity has worked tirelessly to connect nearly 1,200 auto-related sites, attractions and events, the largest concentration of auto-related resources in the world. The heritage area management entity facilitates public private partnerships for the preservation of heritage resources and remembers the auto industry's past while celebrating its future. The auto industry centered in Michigan put the world on wheels, created the American middle class, and continues to define the way we live, work and play.

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