



March 26, 2021

Dear Members of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee,

We, the members of the National Parks Second Century Action Coalitionⁱ, write in support of robust investments for national parks in the upcoming surface transportation or larger infrastructure package. In particular, the coalition supports \$400 million a year for both the national parks portion of the Federal Lands Transportation Program (FLTP) and Nationally Significant Federal Lands and Tribal Project (NSFLTP) program and \$325 million over five years for the National Scenic Byways Program as contemplated in the last year's House of Representatives Investing in a New Vision for the Environment and Surface Transportation in America Act (INVEST in America Act).

The 100+ year-old National Park Service (NPS) is challenged by aging infrastructure, visitation pressures, and decades of inconsistent funding for maintenance needs. As a result, the agency cannot keep pace with repairs at its more than 400 park units across the country, which has led to a maintenance backlog estimated at \$11.9 billion. Transportation assets within the National Park System—paved roads, parking lots, tunnels, and bridges—account for over half of the total backlog, or \$6.15 billion.

While the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) is expected to address up to \$6.5 billion of the backlog, only one third of that may be directed to transportation projects. Therefore, we request additional funding for the Department of Transportation programs that support transportation and transit needs in our national parks. The national parks received one half of one percent of the entire funding package in the Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act, but the demand is much more than that. In the [National Park Service's National Long-Range Transportation Plan](#), the agency estimates the funding necessary to address all transportation needs throughout the service is \$1.5 billion a year for a 6 -10 year period.

Therefore, the coalition supports increasing the Federal Lands Transportation Program to at least \$400 million per year. The FLTP was established to support the transportation infrastructure owned and maintained by the federal land management agencies, including the NPS. In FY 2020, the NPS received \$300 million from this program. Additional investments will help the NPS to chip away at the remaining backlog of needs and maintain current assets, while also providing jobs throughout the country.

In addition, the coalition supports increasing the Nationally Significant Federal Lands and Tribal Projects funding to at least \$400 million per year of dedicated funding with, at minimum, half devoted to public lands. Currently, the NSFLTP funds provide up to \$100 million in annual appropriations for large projects exceeding \$25 million and that are shovel ready. This has been a very popular and necessary funding stream for federal lands and tribes to address massive infrastructure projects needing a large investment at one time.

In recent years, the program's funding has been used for Natchez Trace Parkway, Yellowstone National Park and Tamiami Trail in the Everglades. The latest award provided funding for the overdue replacement of the propane-powered Zion shuttle buses with cost-efficient battery-electric buses, which will cut down on air pollution in and around the park and ensure public access.

In addition to funding increase for FLTP and NSFLTP programs, the coalition supports adding \$325 million over five years in guaranteed funding for the National Scenic Byways Program. This program was established by Congress in 1991 to preserve and protect the nation's scenic but often less traveled roads and promote tourism and economic development. Several national park roads contain or are adjacent to scenic byways. For example, the Blue Ridge Parkway and George Washington Memorial Parkway are both national parks and national scenic byways. And Death Valley Scenic Byway is the main route to and through Death Valley National Park and Great River Road National Byway runs through Vicksburg National Military Park. Resources are needed to support the program with competitive grants for states to install interpretive signs and directional signs and build visitor centers.

Our national parks and public lands generate billions of dollars for local economies in tourism dollars, jobs and tax revenue. Repairing and maintaining them is a smart investment, and will create additional infrastructure-related jobs, as well as preserve visitor access and resources.

Thank you for considering our views,

American Hiking Society
American Society of Landscape Architects
Appalachian Trail Conservancy
Atomic Heritage Foundation
The Coalition to Protect Americas National Parks
The Corps Network
Evangelical Environmental Network
Friends of Acadia
International Inbound Travel Association
National Park Hospitality Association
National Park Partners
National Parks Conservation Association
National Tour Association
National Trust for Historic Preservation
The Pew Charitable Trusts
Scenic America

Southeast Tourism Society
Student Conservation Association
United States Tour Operators Association

ⁱ The National Parks Second Century Action Coalition is made up of organizations supporting conservation, recreation, outdoor industry, travel and tourism and historic preservation that are dedicated to promoting the protection, restoration, and enjoyment of the National Park System for the long-term benefit it offers our nation.