



June 30, 2021

Dear Members:

On behalf of our more than 1.6 million members and supporters nationwide, the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) supports H.R. 3684, the Investing in a New Vision for the Environment and Surface Transportation in America Act (INVEST in America Act), particularly the provisions that pertain to national parks and park gateway community investments. If enacted, this bill would provide critical funding to repair park roads, bridges and transit systems to ensure millions of visitors can continue to experience and enjoy national parks. We also support the bill's significant steps to addressing water infrastructure needs, reducing carbon pollution, advancing mitigation and resiliency measures that help our infrastructure adapt to our changing climate, and addressing the growing conflict between vehicles and wildlife.

For more than a century, our national parks have remained America's favorite places, important pieces of our natural, historical and cultural heritage set aside for future generations to explore and enjoy. But as visitors enjoy our parks, they find the facilities in the parks and nearby communities have become worn and inadequate to meet increasing demand and climate threats. The National Park Service depends on dedicated funding through the Highway Trust Fund to improve park transportation assets to ensure park visitors continue to enjoy our parks and that the park resources are protected.

In particular, NPCA supports funding increases to the Federal Lands Transportation Program (FLTP), Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP), and Federal Lands and Tribal Major Projects Program (FLTMP), formerly named the Nationally Significant Federal Lands and Tribal Projects Program. These programs provide necessary funding to help address the billions of dollars of transportation maintenance needs, such as paved roads, parking lots, tunnels, bridges, and transit systems throughout and providing access to the national parks. We encourage the National Park Service to ensure that a portion of those funds support transit infrastructure to reduce pollution, address congestion in and around our parks and provide access for visitors. For example, funding is needed to install a circulator shuttle and bike paths to better integrate

Headquarters  
777 6<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, Suite 700  
Washington, DC 20001  
P 202.NAT.PARK | 800.628.7275

[NPCA.org](https://www.npca.org)



Pullman National Monument within the historic Chicago neighborhood and provide better access to visitors and local residents.

NPCA supports the inclusion of water quality protection and infrastructure provisions in the legislative package. Parks are only as healthy as the waters that flow in, around, and through them. They provide safe recreation while protecting critical flora and fauna, supporting a \$140 billion water sports and \$36 billion recreational fishing economy. However, park waters are in jeopardy as nearly two-thirds of the 356 national park units that protect water resources suffer from water quality impairments. The bill would authorize more than \$50 billion in wastewater and stormwater infrastructure investments, significantly increase funding for EPA's Clean Water State Revolving Fund, Sec. 221 Sewer Overflow Grants, Tribal wastewater grants, and Clean Water State grants, and ensure investments prioritize natural infrastructure and climate resilient solutions. Investments that will begin to address the water quality impairments threatening the waters our parks and gateway communities depend on.

NPCA also supports the wildlife-related provisions included throughout the bill. It includes a \$400 million wildlife crossing grant program, provisions for updated research and technical training opportunities, and the addition of wildlife-vehicle collision reduction as a qualified project in existing grant and funding streams. The Federal Highway Administration estimates 1-2 million wildlife-vehicle collisions occur annually and the associated costs to motorists is estimated to be \$8.3 billion yearly in medical costs and vehicle damage. The provisions in this bill will help reduce collisions and the associated costs to humans and wildlife.

NPCA is also very supportive of provisions that focus on reducing climate pollution and support climate vulnerability assessments and resiliency improvements both in existing and new transportation infrastructure investments. This includes provisions that incorporate natural infrastructure in surface transportation design both inside and outside our national parks. Also notable is support for efforts to plan for and provide financial resources to better design or locate transportation assets that are susceptible to extreme weather events as a result of climate change.

Additionally, we are encouraged by the provisions and funding to expand electric vehicle charging infrastructure throughout the country and NPCA encourages the siting

Headquarters  
777 6<sup>th</sup> Street, NW, Suite 700  
Washington, DC 20001  
P 202.NAT.PARK | 800.628.7275

[NPCA.org](https://www.npca.org)



of some of these charging locations in and around our national parks. However, we are disappointed the bill does not include support for replacing the federal fleet (cars, trucks, buses, shuttles), including vehicles used by the National Park Service, with zero-emission vehicles. National parks are at the forefront of the climate crisis and should be part of the solution to tackling it.

We also support provisions that direct the Transportation Research Board (TRB) to study both stormwater runoff practices and climate resilient transportation infrastructure. Runoff from roads can degrade the quality of water in and near parks. The problem is exacerbated by heavier rains and increased storms. We hope the TRB studies can help address the runoff problem by prioritizing natural infrastructure that absorbs flood waters, filters pollutants, creates habitat and provides safe drinking water for visitors to parks and nearby towns.

Finally, we support all provisions and efforts to preserve the protections and public involvement through the National Environmental Policy Act. People deserve to have a say in federal projects that impact the health, economy and environment for their communities.

Fixing our national park infrastructure is a good economic investment for our country. National parks are an important part of the tourism economy and extremely popular with Americans. National parks received more than 328 million visits in 2019 that generated almost \$42 billion for the U.S. economy. For every dollar Congress invests in the National Park Service, \$10 is returned to the American economy, with much of that money directly benefiting parks' gateway communities. With national parks supporting more than 340,000 private-sector jobs annually, these economic engines are worthy of a robust infrastructure investment in 2021 and beyond.

Overall, the INVEST in America Act charts a strong path forward for surface transportation in our nation's parks and water infrastructure near our parks and provides solutions to addressing our changing climate.



## **Positions on Select Amendments:**

***Beyer, Gallego 41 (4):*** NPCA **supports** this amendment to include the Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act and ensure wildlife can continue to migrate, move and thrive in the face of increasing threats to their populations. Facilitating improved on-the-ground collaboration to encourage habitat connectivity efforts across the country may be the strongest tool for protecting park wildlife for the long term. This bill will provide the framework to do this work while respecting the priorities, capacity and needs of land managers at all levels.

***Barragan 82 (3):*** NPCA **supports** this amendment which would establish by law the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (ORLP) at the National Park Service. The ORLP is a nationally competitive matching grant program for communities to acquire land and water for parks or recreation purposes or develop new or renovate existing outdoor recreation facilities. Priority is given to urban areas that engage and empower underserved communities. Since OLRP started six years ago, nearly \$30 million in federal grants have been matched 1:1 by private and non-federal entities to provide benefits to 40 communities in 28 states.

***Grijalva 176 (4):*** NPCA **supports** this amendment, which would strengthen the implementation of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). NEPA is a bedrock environmental law that ensures community and environmental concerns are considered by the federal government before large-scale federal projects are undertaken. From the winding carriage roads in Acadia National Park in Maine to the sweeping deserts of Chaco Culture National Historic Park in New Mexico, NEPA has guaranteed sound governmental decision making when considering park needs. This amendment is a crucial step to ensuring that community and environmental needs are prioritized by the federal government.

***Brownley 174 (7):*** NPCA **supports** the establishment of a Climate Safe Working Group in the U.S. Global Change Research Program. The U.S. Global Change Research Program is a federal program mandated by Congress to coordinate federal research and investments to understand what impacts the global environment and the impacts of those changes, both human and natural. This amendment would help the program



focus resources to understand the specific impacts of climate change as it relates to infrastructure development and operation.

**Cicilline 38 (18):** NPCA **supports** increased funding for the National Scenic Byways Program to provide crucial funding to our nation's scenic roads to help promote tourism and economic development to local communities. The National Scenic Byways Program preserves and protects the nation's scenic but often less traveled roads by allowing states to install interpretive signs and directional signs and build visitor centers. 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.

**Gomez, Morelle 181 (42):** NPCA **supports** this amendment to award grants to local governments and transportation agencies to provide transportation connectors from critically underserved urban communities and rural communities to green spaces from city parks to national parks. The COVID-19 pandemic has clearly shown the need and demand for greenspaces and the health benefits they provide. These grants would create opportunities for families, regardless of their income or zip code, to experience the water, land, wildlife, cultural history, and recreational opportunities provided by local and national parks.

**Krishnamoorthi 96 (53):** NPCA **supports** this amendment that encourages the federal government to use environmentally friendly materials in building and rebuilding our country's infrastructure, including in our national parks. The decisions we make today matter, including what materials we use to build our infrastructure, and will have implications to our nation and our national parks for generations to come.

**Tonko, McKinley, McGovern 127 (100):** NPCA **supports** this amendment which would reauthorize the funding authorizations for 32 National Heritage Areas set to expire in 2021 and 2022. Heritage areas are great examples of truly impactful public-private partnerships that allow communities all across the country to more capably preserve and interpret their part of the American experience. NPCA strongly supports the National Heritage Area program. Loss of federal funding will require the impacted NHAs



to layoff staff, reduce programs and services to their communities and their partners, and possibly lead to the permanent suspension of their operations. We urge Congress to act to fix this looming fiscal crisis.

***Leger Fernandez 171 (113):*** NPCA **supports** this amendment that would permanently reauthorize the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) and double the authorization of appropriations to provide additional support for state, tribal, and local efforts of historic preservation. HPF was created by Congress in 1976 to facilitate the documentation, preservation, and interpretation of our cultural and historic resources, often reaching into urban and rural communities that lack other sources of financial support for this critical work.

Sincerely,

Kristen Brengel  
Senior Vice President of Government Affairs