

Nancy Johnson



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Johnson to Park Service: Put Conservation First

Congresswoman Urges Stronger National Park Protections

WASHINGTON, DC -- Congresswoman Nancy Johnson today called on the Interior Department to uphold strong conservation safeguards for our national parks and reject proposals to weaken them. In a letter today to the director of the National Park Service, Johnson said the proposed revisions to agency guidelines would "wrongly make recreation a higher priority than conservation, overturning a century of park management practice."

"Our National Parks bring to life our history and teach us the wonders of the natural world," Johnson wrote. "I urge the Interior Department to retain the original, intended purpose of the National Parks guidelines and affirm the need for conservation above all."

Johnson's letter to National Park Service Director Fran Mainella is below.

November 2, 2005

Hon. Fran Mainella, Director
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW, Room 7256
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Director Mainella,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to proposed revisions in our national parks policy. These changes would wrongly make recreation a higher priority than conservation, overturning a century of park management practice.

The act that founded the National Park Service in 1916 directed the agency to "conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." While the national parks serve the

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purpose of enjoyment for people, we must also remember that preserving them is important so that future generations will have the opportunity to enjoy them as well. I believe that the new focus on recreation will inevitably clash with the historic mission of the park service. For example, I am concerned that under the proposed recreational mandate efforts to restrict air and noise pollution created by motor vehicles would be sidelined in favor of providing greater access.

I am equally troubled that the proposal drops a phrase from the current regulations which states that “Congress has provided that if there is a conflict between conserving resources and values and providing for enjoyment of them, conservation is to be predominant.” I urge you to retain this phrase as it is of the utmost importance to preserve and conserve resources for the enjoyment of future generations.

Our National Parks bring to life our history and teach us the wonders of the natural world. Again, I urge the Interior Department to retain the original, intended purpose of the National Parks guidelines and affirm the need for conservation above all.

Very truly yours,

/s/

Nancy L. Johnson
Member of Congress

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