

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 30, 2005

Chairman Richard Pombo
House Committee on Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Pombo:

We have read with alarm the recent Committee on Resources budget reconciliation proposal. We strongly object to the proposed plans to sell fifteen of the country's national parks to private developers and to permit the commercialization of facilities, trails, vehicles, and park maps. Spoiling the nation's treasures in favor of short term reconciliation goals is unconscionable.

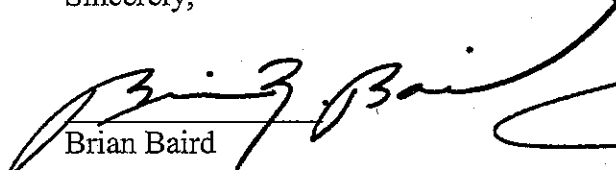
The fifteen national parks specified in the draft language amount to almost twenty-five percent of the total National Park System acreage. These parks include those honoring some of America's favorite sons and daughters including Eugene O'Neil, Mary McLeod Bethune, and Frederick Law Olmsted. They also honor major periods of our history including the exploration of the American west and the Cold War. Significantly, your proposal would even sell off Theodore Roosevelt Island, the memorial to the visionary president who advanced the nation's appreciation for land conservation and helped to develop what eventually became the National Park Service.

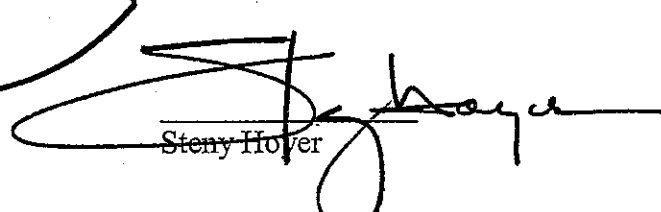
The draft language also calls for national parks to be treated like advertising billboards. Under the plan, naming rights can be sold and free space cluttered with advertisements for any product or service. There is no specific guidance or limitation offered in the language.

The proposed reconciliation language advances the agenda of the recently circulated park system basic management policy draft. That document called for more disruptive uses of national parks that conflicted with the goal of preservation. For ninety years the National Park System has had a clear preservation mission. The draft reconciliation language, along with the management policy draft, radically alters that mission. Instead of preservation and conservation for future generations, the goal seems to have become short term profit.

We implore you to reject these proposals, whether a part of reconciliation or any other legislative package, in no-uncertain terms and ensure the American people that their national parks will be a legacy left for future generations.

Sincerely,


Brian Baird


Steny Hoyer

Barbara Lee

Barbara Lee

Rush Holt

Rush Holt

Tammy Baldwin

Tammy Baldwin

Jan Schakowsky

Jan Schakowsky

Jim McDermott

Jim McDermott

Chris Van Hollen

Chris Van Hollen

Raul Grijalva

Raul Grijalva

Martin Meehan

Martin Meehan

Elijah Cummings

Elijah Cummings

Richard Neal

Richard Neal

Edolphus Towns

Edolphus Towns

George Miller

George Miller

Earl Blumenauer

Earl Blumenauer

Dale Kildee

Dale Kildee

Barney Frank

Barney Frank

Howard Berman

Howard Berman

Donald Payne

Donald Payne

Peter DeFazio

Peter DeFazio

Ed Markey

Ed Markey

Robert Menendez

Robert Menendez

Maurice Hinchey

Maurice Hinchey

Pete Stark

Pete Stark

Tim Ryan

Tim Ryan

Frank Pallone

Frank Pallone

John Lewis

John Lewis

Luis V. Gutierrez

Luis Gutierrez

~~*Gregory W Meeks*~~

~~Gregory Meeks~~

Debbie Wasserman Schultz

Debbie Wasserman Schultz

Susan Davis

Susan Davis

~~*Maxine Waters*~~

~~Maxine Waters~~

Jesse Jackson, Jr.

Jesse Jackson, Jr.

Bart Gordon

Bart Gordon

Lloyd Doggett

Lloyd Doggett

Mike Honda

Mike Honda

Stephanie Herseth

Stephanie Herseth