



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Frelinghuysen:

On behalf of the employees and visitors of the National Park Service, we want to thank you for your service to our country and wish you the very best in your retirement. I want to personally express my sincere gratitude for your dedication to America's national parks and public lands. For over 23 years you have served as the U.S. Representative for New Jersey's 11th Congressional district; a district that encompasses Thomas Edison National Historical Park (NHP) and Morristown National Historical Park (NHP). You have been a true champion for these parks in addition to the 415 other units in the National Park System.

As Chairman of the House Committee on Appropriations for the 115th Congress your direction was instrumental in providing \$2.9 billion in discretionary appropriations in FY 2017 and \$3.2 billion in FY 2018. These funds provide critical support to ensure our national treasures are conserved, protected, and enjoyed for the next generation. During your tenure, visitation to our national parks peaked in FY 2017 at 334 million recreational visits. As visitation is projected to rise, it is imperative that the National Park Service continues to preserve unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations.

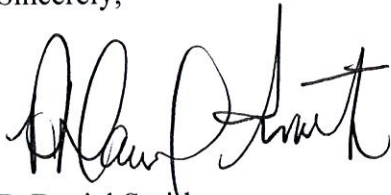
Due in large part to your leadership, \$132.0 million was appropriated in FY 2017 and \$256.5 million in FY 2018 for Line Item Construction projects. These projects reduce the deferred maintenance backlog on the highest priority assets in the National Park System. With a deferred maintenance backlog of over \$11.6 billion, half of which is on transportation infrastructure, the NPS strategically invests in those assets critical to the safety of visitors and employees, protection of resources, and operability of systems essential to the access, experience, and mission of each national park unit. Examples of projects supported under your direction include repairing Arlington Memorial Bridge, which connects Virginia to Washington, DC, restoring flood damaged Scotty's Castle visitor center at Death Valley NP, and seismic retrofits at multiple parks.

Also appropriated during your tenure as Chairman was \$20.0 million in FY 2017 and \$23.0 million in FY 2018 for Centennial Challenge projects. In recent history there have been three Centennial Challenge projects at Thomas Edison NHP and due to the partnerships with the Edison Innovation Foundation, the Friends of Thomas Edison NHP, and Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, respectively. Accessibility paths were installed at the historic home Glenmont, the historic line shafts in the heavy machine shop will be repaired, and 75,000 documents from Thomas Edison's 1920-1925 archives will become more accessible to researchers in digital format.

At Morristown NHP, the park is grateful for your support of several important projects including the Washington's Headquarters Museum and the Discover History Center. The February 2018 grand opening of the new exhibits in the hands on interactive museum was a decade in the making and now visitors can immerse themselves in multi-media experiences to explore the stories of Morristown, the Continental Army, General Washington, and the Continental Congress. Other major projects at Morristown NHP include repairs to the museum's roof, conservation of significant paintings in the collection, an upgrade to the museum auditorium audio visual system, and removing hazard trees throughout the park.

Our best wishes are with you and your family as you begin your hard-earned retirement. We are truly grateful for your support and dedication and hope that in the years to come you continue to enjoy the many natural and historical parks our great country has to offer.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "P. Daniel Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "P" and a long, sweeping underline.

P. Daniel Smith

Deputy Director

Exercising the Authority of the Director