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WATER, POWER, AND OCEANS
COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

January 4, 2019

The Honorable David Bernhardt
Acting Secretary of the Interior
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street Northwest
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Acting Secretary Bernhardt:

I want to thank you for the diligent efforts that the administration has made to keep our national parks open to the public during the current government shutdown.

This has been particularly important to visitors to Yosemite National Park and its gateway communities. Our concessionaire at Yosemite is Aramark, which has maintained the restrooms and garbage collection in the valley during the current shutdown at its own expense. Outside the valley, however, there are increasingly dire reports of irresponsible individuals who are producing uncollected buildups of garbage and even human waste.

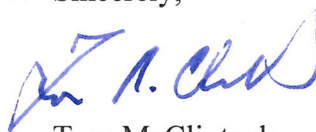
This has also been true at Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, where the Delaware North Corporation has provided clean up at their facilities while conditions have deteriorated outside their jurisdiction. Park rangers at some sites believe this poses such a threat to public safety that they are closing portions of the public lands throughout the National Park System.

The Antideficiency Act, which generally prohibits agencies from continued operation in the absence of appropriations, makes an exception for "emergencies involving the safety of human life or the protection of property."

I believe these developments present a clear risk to public health and safety and to federal property. Accordingly, the collection of garbage and the servicing of restrooms certainly falls within the actions the Park Service can take during the current lapse of appropriations.

I would therefore urgently request that you invoke this exception to the Antideficiency Act immediately so that the public can continue to exercise its right to access the public lands safely until appropriations can be made.

Sincerely,



Tom McClintock