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COMMITTEE ON
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WATER, POWER, AND OCEANS
COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0504

November 3, 2017

The Honorable Ryan Zinke
Secretary
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W., Mail Stop 2346
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Zinke:

As we briefly discussed last week, I want to express my serious concern with the Department of Interior's proposal to increase entrance fees to seventeen units of our National Parks Service system.

Two of the principal objectives I have set as Chairman of the House Federal Lands Subcommittee are to restore public access to the public lands and to restore the federal government as a good neighbor to communities directly impacted by the public lands. The proposed fee increases run counter to both policies.

At a time when we are trying to encourage more Americans to visit and value our national parks, more than doubling entrance fees is certain to have a significant adverse impact on park visits and the commerce they bring to our gateway communities.

I understand the Department's concerns over revenues, and the House Federal Lands Subcommittee is working to assure that revenues generated in our parks through visitations and attendant commerce stay in our parks. Furthermore, the House Natural Resources Committee is seeking to prioritize Land and Water Conservation Funds away from excessive land acquisition and toward addressing the Park Service's growing maintenance backlog. I know you agree that before we acquire new land, we should first take care of what we already own.

These steps would assure funds are made available to address maintenance issues without undermining the very purpose of our national parks: to welcome the American people to the lands set aside for their "use, resort, and recreation," as promised in the original Yosemite Charter of 1864.

I submit these comments in the sincere hope that you will not implement the proposed fee increases.

Sincerely,



Tom McClintock