



September 18, 2018

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski, Chair
Committee on Energy and Natural
Resources
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Natural
Resources
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Cantwell:

The undersigned members of the Outdoor Recreation Roundtable urge your rapid and positive action on the nomination of **David Vela to serve as the Director of the National Park Service**, an appointment of significant importance to the outdoor recreation industry.

The National Park Service has helped Americans discover and enjoy our natural and historic legacy for more than 100 years. Our national parks have led conservation efforts globally and are an economic underpinning for communities across the nation.

America's national parks are a marvelous, unifying legacy deserving our support and celebration. Our parks have talented partners, including friends' organizations and volunteers and concessioners – and marvelous places. But America's national parks need strong leadership and vision, new resources and new strategies. National park visitation has just recently returned to levels of 25 years ago despite a growth in the US population of more than 30%, a surge in international visitors and the addition of dozens of new park units. Our parks do not serve our diverse society well. The system faces a backlog of deferred maintenance nearing \$12 billion and infrastructure poorly equipped to meet the expectations of contemporary visitors.

We believe that David Vela can be an effective leader of the National Park Service early in its Second Century. David is nearing completion of his third decade with the agency, He has served as superintendent of Grand Teton National Park for five years, helping the park accommodate record visitation levels and solving a variety of long-standing issues. His NPS career has included service in headquarters as NPS' Associate

Director for Workforce, Relevancy and Inclusion. He served for four years as the NPS Southeast Regional Director and as superintendent of Palo Alto Battlefield National Historic Site, Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park, and the George Washington Memorial Parkway. He has familiarity with both the opportunities and challenges of

urban and rural park units, and as the first-ever Hispanic-American nominated to serve as Director, an understanding of the need for and challenges of diversity in staff and visitation.

He understands the importance of national parks to sustainable local economies and protection of key park attributes. He has experienced challenges arising from fires and floods, blizzards and eclipses and has drawn together the professional staff of the agency, concessioners, gateways and supporters to respond as a team unified in protecting and managing park resources.

The outdoor recreation industry pledges its active support to David Vela. As Commerce's Outdoor Recreation Satellite Account documents, our industry comprises 2% of the nation's GDP, employs more than 4.3 Americans, produces \$673 billion annually in Gross Output and is growing at a faster rate than the overall economy. And our industry, like our national parks, can be a sustainable pillar of our nation.

We look forward to your nomination hearing in the near future and believe that it will convince your committee that David will rally park supporters and agency staff to keep our national park system and its programs supporting other conservation efforts relevant and thriving.

Sincerely,

American Horse Council
American Sportfishing Association
Archery Trade Association
Association of Marina Industries
BoatU.S.
International Snowmobile
Manufacturers Association
Marine Retailers Association of the
Americas
Motorcycle Industry Council
National Association of RV Parks &
Campgrounds
National Marine Manufacturers
Association

National Park Hospitality
Association
National Shooting Sports
Foundation
Outdoor Industry Association
Recreation Vehicle Dealers
Association
Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle
Association
RV Industry Association
Specialty Equipment Market
Association
Specialty Vehicle Industry
Association

cc: Hon. Ryan Zinke, Secretary of the Interior

