Restore Our Parks Act  
S. 3172

ISSUE OVERVIEW

The National Park Service (NPS) manages more than 400 national park units—iconic landscapes, historic and cultural sites, trails, military battlegrounds, monuments, and memorials—throughout the country.

As a result of aging facilities, strain on resources caused by increased visitation at many park units, and inconsistent annual funding, NPS has been unable to keep pace with park repairs. Based on 2017 data, the agency estimates it would cost $11.6 billion to address its maintenance backlog.

The Restore Our Parks Act, bipartisan legislation introduced by Sens. Portman (R-OH) Warner (D-VA), Alexander (R-TN), and King (I-ME) in the Senate, would direct dedicated annual federal funding to address national park deferred maintenance needs. The bill would help to preserve our nation’s history, recreation opportunities, and local communities that depend on park visitors to flourish.

SPECIFIC LEGISLATIVE PROVISIONS
S. 3172 would:

• Establish a federal fund in the U.S. Treasury—named the “National Park Service Legacy Restoration Fund”—to draw down the national park maintenance backlog.

• Direct revenues from the on-shore, off-shore and renewable energy operations that are not already allocated by law to other programs.

• Direct 50% of these available, unobligated receipts per year to the Fund—up to $1.3 billion a year.

• Provide parity between non-transportation and transportation projects:
  --65% of the Fund would be used for the repair and rehabilitation of NPS assets including: historic structures, visitor facilities, trails, water utility systems, and assets that impact disability access, health and safety, and recreation.

  --35% of the Fund would be used to restore transportation-related infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, and tunnels.

• Allow monies to remain in Fund until expended.

• Allow for funds to be invested with any interest accrued to be returned to Fund.

• Prohibit allocated funds from being used for land acquisition or to replace discretionary funding for NPS facility operations and maintenance needs.

• Provide the Appropriations Committees an opportunity to review NPS’ deferred maintenance list.

• Encourage donations to be directed toward deferred maintenance efforts.

CURRENT STATUS

S. 3172 was introduced on June 28, 2018 and was referred to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee.