



Legislation Text

File #: RES 17-1290, **Version:** 1

Supporting the United States National Park System.

WHEREAS, the United States National Park System is a living testament to our citizens' valor, our nation's hardships, our victories, and our traditions as Americans, and has been called "America's Best Idea;" and

WHEREAS, the National Park System preserves the diversity, culture, and heritage of all Americans, and serves as a living classroom for future generations; and

WHEREAS, in 2016, the National Park Service celebrated its centennial and currently manages more than 400 nationally significant sites and an invaluable collection of more than 75,000 natural and cultural assets that span 84 million acres across all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and several U.S. territories and insular areas; and

WHEREAS, Minnesota is blessed with 5 national park sites, including the beautiful Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, 72 miles of riverway which provide families and individuals a chance to hike, boat, fish, swim, camp and enjoy; and

WHEREAS, one of St. Paul's key community objectives in our Comprehensive Plan is to preserve, protect, and restore our community's natural areas and embrace the Mississippi River as a regional asset with national significance because of its cultural, recreational and economic benefits; and

WHEREAS, in 2016, the National Park System had more than 325 million visits nationally with Minnesota seeing 975,192 visitors to its 5 national park sites; and

WHEREAS, in 2016, National Park Service estimates indicate that park visitors spent more than \$56 million in St. Paul and other gateway communities in Minnesota; and

WHEREAS, visitor spending in gateway communities in Minnesota directly created 897 jobs, contributed to local community tax base and helped grow our economy; and

WHEREAS, the National Park Service has the obligation to preserve our nation's history; promote access to national parks for all citizens; stimulate revenue to sustain itself and nearby communities; educate the public about America's natural, cultural and historical resources, and provide safe facilities and environs to enjoy these resources; and

WHEREAS, despite a mission to make parks accessible and open, because of Congressional underfunding the National Park Service has a backlog in Minnesota of \$21 million needed for infrastructure repairs to aging historical structures, trails, sewers, drainage, hundreds of miles of roads, bridges, tunnels, and other vital infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of Congress to maintain America's national parks to ensure our natural places and our history is preserved and documented for future generations, and for the adjacent communities that rely on the direct and indirect economic benefits generated by visits to national park sites;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Saint Paul City Council strongly encourages Congress to

create a reliable, predictable stream of resources to address deferred maintenance needs in the United States National Park System.