



RESTORE OUR PARKS ACT (S. 500)

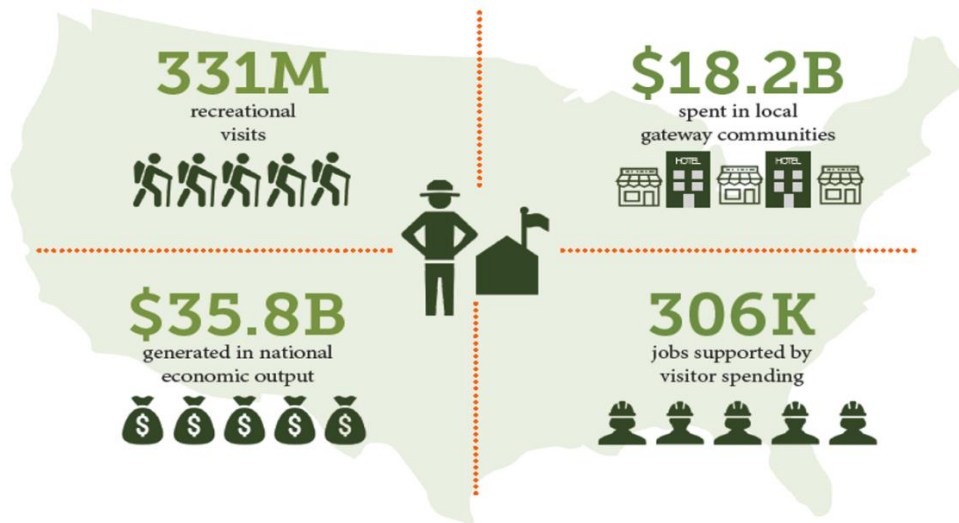
ISSUE OVERVIEW

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 nearly \$12 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.

Park Economics



Sources: NPS Visitor Use Statistics, Annual Summary Report 2017;
2017 National Park Visitor Spending Effects: Economic Contributions to Local Communities, States, and the Nation.
Natural Resource Report NPS/NRSS/EQD/NRR-2018/1616

S. 500 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 50% of unobligated receipts from on-shore, off-shore, and renewable energy operations to the Fund, up to \$1.3 billion per year for five years, for a possible total of \$6.5 billion.
- 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 the accrued income to be returned to Fund.
- Prohibit allocated funds from being used for land acquisition, employee bonuses, or to replace discretionary funding for NPS facility operations and maintenance needs.
- Requires the Secretary of the Interior to provide the Senate Energy and Natural Resources and the House Natural Resources Committees, as part of the President’s annual budget submission, a list of projects for which the funding is being allocated.
- Encourage donations to be directed toward deferred maintenance efforts.

Current Status

S. 500 was reintroduced on February 14, 2019 and was referred to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. Similar legislation, H.R. 1225 was introduced in the House on February 14, 2019 and was referred to the House Natural Resources and House Transportation and Infrastructure Committees.