

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4804

COMMITTEES
APPROPRIATIONS
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES
INTELLIGENCE
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

June 19, 2018

Lt. Col. William J. Miller
District Commander
Huntington District
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
502 Eighth Street
Huntington, WV 25701

Dear Colonel Miller,

While I appreciate your June 13th letter notifying me about potential closures to recreation areas in the Huntington District, I wanted to take this opportunity to politely remind you and your staff that Congress holds the power of the purse, not the Office of Management and Budget. As a member of the Senate Committee on Appropriations, I will continue to ensure our special places in West Virginia stay open in fiscal year 2019 and beyond, and I strongly encourage you to withhold announcing any potential closures in the future until you receive explicit direction from Congress to do so.

While it is perfectly reasonable for the Huntington District to plan ahead, it is not appropriate for the Huntington District to be notifying members of Congress and the public of “potential adverse recreation impacts” based upon planning efforts following the President’s Budget request and not from the direction provided by Congress. As you may know, the Senate is currently considering H.R. 5895, the legislative vehicle for Energy and Water Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2019, which funds Army Corps Operations and Maintenance account at \$3.8 billion and Construction at \$2.3 billion. Combined, the funding levels are \$3.2 billion dollars higher than the funding levels in the President’s budget and more than enough to support the continued operation of these important West Virginia facilities.

Last year, 3.5 million visitors came to West Virginia to enjoy everything we have to offer. West Virginia is Wild and Wonderful for a reason – it truly is almost heaven. According to the West Virginia Tourism Office, West Virginia’s tourism is a \$4.1 billion dollar industry. USACE offers visitors to our state numerous recreational opportunities, including camping at the numerous campgrounds such as Sutton Lake, which according to USACE’s very own website is “one of the best kept secrets in WV.”

I am deeply concerned by the lapses committed by Huntington District in its planning process for the upcoming fiscal year, and their adverse impacts on West Virginia’s vibrant tourism and recreation economy. I ask for written clarification that the recreation sites in the Huntington District you mention in your letter will remain open for the remainder of the fiscal year and a commitment that, under your leadership, the Huntington District will refrain from making

unilateral policy directives that create unnecessary confusion for the people and businesses of West Virginia that depend on the Army Corps.

I look forward to your timely response.

With warm wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joe Manchin III", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Joe Manchin III
United States Senator