

United States Senate

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COMMITTEES
APPROPRIATIONS
ARMED SERVICES
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

June 6, 2019

The Honorable Dan Smith
Acting Director, National Park Service
The Department of Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

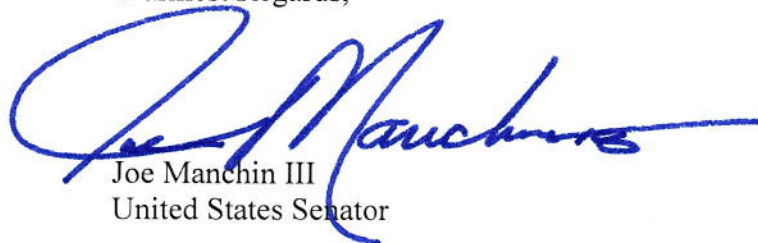
Dear Acting Director Smith,

I would first like to thank you and your staff for the work on the Wheeling National Heritage Area and their evaluation that began in September of 2017. As the Ranking Member on the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, I am well aware of the impact that National Heritage Areas can have on local communities, and I believe Wheeling Heritage is an example of the very best that this program can offer.

Wheeling Heritage has been essential in boosting the local economy and helping turn downtown Wheeling into a thriving area. In the past three years, the area has added 37 new businesses and seen a decrease in the city's vacancy rate by 17 percent, showing just how successful these efforts can be with community involvement. These efforts were recognized when it was named one of three winners of the 2019 Great American Main Street Award.

Section 3052 of Public Law 113-291 requires the National Park Service to conduct an evaluation of Wheeling National Heritage Area to undergo a congressional mandated evaluation of its accomplishments in order to be eligible for funding after FY 2020. In September 2018, the evaluation for the Wheeling National Heritage Area was submitted for final approval by the National Park Service, but has yet to be delivered to Congress or Wheeling Heritage. I hope that you can provide a timetable for when the National Park Service plans to transmit this evaluation to Congress. I look forward to receiving the evaluation findings, and I am confident that they will show just how impactful this program has been in advancing the goals of the National Heritage Areas program.

Warmest Regards,



Joe Manchin III
United States Senator