

# **EVEN A SHORT SHUTDOWN HAS LASTING ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES FOR AMERICANS**

**September 25, 2015**

The Honorable Barack Obama  
President  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The deadline for funding federal government operations is fast approaching. We are writing to express our strong support for a funding solution that will avoid another harmful government shutdown. We believe that you and the Congress can and should provide a short-term continuation of funding for all federal programs without harmful environmental riders and then undertake a serious and transparent negotiation that ultimately replaces the damaging sequester and sets final spending limits for FY 2016 and several subsequent years.

The 2013 federal shutdown had major, ongoing impacts on millions of Americans far from the Nation's Capital. According to Standard and Poor's, the 16-day government shutdown in 2013 is estimated to have cost our economy an estimated \$24 billion and stalled the creation of over 100,000 private sector jobs. According to U.S. Travel Association, the shutdown directly reduced travel spending by \$680 million, or nearly \$43 million per day. It imposed delays in life-saving NIH research studies and payment of veterans' disability claims and robbed millions of people of the chance to enjoy their parks – in addition to over \$400 million in lost revenue which visits to parks would have generated.

As organizations that advocate on behalf of the federal lands and the individuals and communities that depend on them, this nation cannot afford another federal shutdown. Each day of closure denied an estimated 700,000 individual national park experiences. In addition to the National Park Service furloughing over 21,000 employees for 16 days, the National Park Hospitality Association estimated that approximately 19,000 non-government workers in parks – concession employees, nonprofit partners, contractors, and others – became unemployed or significantly under-employed as a result of national park closures during the 2013 federal shutdown. Unlike the federal employees, these workers were not subsequently compensated for those 16 days of park closures.

Another federal shutdown would again harm innocent Americans and the businesses helping our economy to grow. For instance, the National Park Conservation Association

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estimates national park gateway communities could lose as much as \$42 million a day if there is a government shutdown starting October 1<sup>st</sup>. According to economists at the U.S. Travel Association, another shutdown would cost the U.S. travel sector at least \$185 million per day in economic output due to lost activity and affect 530,000 travel-related jobs due to temporary layoffs, reduced wages and fewer hours worked.

In addition, some 10% of all park visits are by international guests - whose spending helps the nation have a favorable balance of trade in tourism. Recent estimates are that one US job is created for every 35 inbound travelers to the USA. And national parks figure importantly in the National Strategy for Travel and Tourism, which has set a national goal of strengthening the US economy by increasing the number of international visitors to 100 million by 2021. Reaching this goal will not be helped by disgruntled visitors to the US, denied access to parks, nor by the uncertainty caused by publicity about US national parks being gated and closed.

Another government shutdown would also complicate efforts to assess long-term strategies for key federal programs, including the National Park Service. You have offered an important vision for long-term strength for the park system and programs this agency oversees as it celebrates its Centennial in 2016. Discussion of this initiative will be hampered significantly by a divisive and disruptive shutdown in 2015.

Please lead efforts to resolve issues on budgets and other national issues without imposing unjustified, unnecessary pain on the rest of the nation, including for our parks and other public lands.

Sincerely,

Alaska Geographic  
Alcatraz Cruises  
American Alliance of Museums  
American Association for Nude Recreation  
American Bus Association  
American History Association  
American Horse Council  
American Outdoors Association  
American Recreation Coalition  
American Sportfishing Association  
Appalachian Trail Conservancy  
Arizona National History Association  
Association of Marina Industries  
Association of Partners for Public Lands  
Badlands Natural History Association  
Black Hills Parks & Forests Association  
Cabrillo National Monument Foundation  
Capitol Reef National History Association

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Carlsbad Caverns/Guadalupe Mountains Association  
CHM Government Services  
Coalition to Protect Americas National Parks  
Colorado National Monument Association  
Conservation Legacy  
Cradle of Forestry in America Interpretive Association  
Craters of the Moon National History Association, Inc.  
Creole Nature Trail All-American Road  
Destination Marketing Association International  
Devils Tower Natural History Association  
Discover Your Northwest  
Eastern National  
Eastern Sierra Interpretive Association  
Friends of Dyke Marsh  
Friends of Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park  
Friends of Klondike Corridor  
Friends of Mount Rogers  
Friends of Pompeys Pillar  
Friends of Saguaro National Park  
Friends of the Smokies  
Friends of Virgin Islands National Park  
Glacier National Park Conservancy  
Grand Canyon Association  
Grand Teton Association  
Grand Teton National Park Foundation  
Great Smoky Mountains Association  
Harpers Ferry Historical Association  
Intermountain Natural History Association  
Isle Royale & Keweenaw Parks Association  
Jefferson National Parks Association  
Lake Charles Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Manzanar History Association  
Marinas International  
Mesa Verde Museum Association  
Mississippi River Fund  
National Association for Interpretation  
National Association of RV Parks & Campgrounds  
National First Ladies' Library  
National Forest Recreation Association  
National Park Hospitality Association  
National Parks Conservation Association  
National Tour Association  
Nevada Outdoor School  
Outdoor Industry Association  
PeopleForBikes  
Petrified Forest Museum Association

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Recreation Vehicle Dealers Association  
Recreation Vehicle Industry Association  
Red Rock Canyon Interpretive Association  
Rosie the Riveter Trust  
Sawtooth Interpretive & Historical Association  
Shenandoah National Park Association  
Southeast Tourism Society  
Southern Nevada Conservancy  
Specialty Equipment Market Association  
St. Croix River Association  
Statue Cruises  
Student and Youth Travel Association  
Theodore Roosevelt Nature & History Association  
Trust for the National Mall  
US Travel Association  
Voyageurs National Park Association  
Western National Parks Association  
Yellowstone Association  
Yosemite Conservancy

# EVEN A SHORT SHUTDOWN HAS LASTING ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES FOR AMERICANS

September 25, 2015

Honorable Mitch McConnell, Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable John Boehner, Speaker of the House  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Harry Reid, Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Messrs. McConnell, Boehner and Reid and Ms. Pelosi:

The deadline for funding federal government operations is fast approaching. We are writing to express our strong support for a funding solution that will avoid another harmful government shutdown. We believe that Congress and the President can and should provide a short-term continuation of funding for all federal programs without harmful environmental riders and then undertake a serious and transparent negotiation that ultimately replaces the damaging sequester and sets final spending limits for FY 2016 and several subsequent years.

The 2013 federal shutdown had major, ongoing impacts on millions of Americans far from the Nation's Capital. According to Standard and Poor's, the 16-day government shutdown in 2013 is estimated to have cost our economy an estimated \$24 billion and stalled the creation of over 100,000 private sector jobs. According to U.S. Travel Association, the shutdown directly reduced travel spending by \$680 million, or nearly \$43 million per day. It imposed delays in life-saving NIH research studies and payment of veterans' disability claims and robbed millions of people of the chance to enjoy their parks – in addition to over \$400 million in lost revenue which visits to parks would have generated.

As organizations that advocate on behalf of the federal lands and the individuals and communities that depend on them, this nation cannot afford another federal shutdown. Each day of closure denied an estimated 700,000 individual national park experiences. In addition to the National Park Service furloughing over 21,000 employees for 16 days, the National Park Hospitality Association estimated that approximately 19,000 non-

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government workers in parks – concession employees, nonprofit partners, contractors, and others – became unemployed or significantly under-employed as a result of national park closures during the 2013 federal shutdown. Unlike the federal employees, these workers were not subsequently compensated for those 16 days of park closures.

Another federal shutdown would again harm innocent Americans and the businesses helping our economy to grow. For instance, the National Park Conservation Association estimates national park gateway communities could lose as much as \$42 million a day if there is a government shutdown starting October 1<sup>st</sup>. According to economists at the U.S. Travel Association, another shutdown would cost the U.S. travel sector at least \$185 million per day in economic output due to lost activity and affect 530,000 travel-related jobs due to temporary layoffs, reduced wages and fewer hours worked.

In addition, some 10% of all park visits are by international guests - whose spending helps the nation have a favorable balance of trade in tourism. Recent estimates are that one US job is created for every 35 inbound travelers to the USA. And national parks figure importantly in the National Strategy for Travel and Tourism, which has set a national goal of strengthening the US economy by increasing the number of international visitors to 100 million by 2021. Reaching this goal will not be helped by disgruntled visitors to the US, denied access to parks, nor by the uncertainty caused by publicity about US national parks being gated and closed.

On the eve of their centennial year, the government must remain open and efforts should be made to reinvest in our national treasures over the long-term through the annual budgets and other supplemental means. For instance, the National Park Service operations budget has been cut by more than 7% over the last five years, in today's dollars. That has led to fewer rangers to protect parks and greet the public who comes to enjoy them and spend their tourism dollars in nearby communities. Roads, trails, visitor centers and other infrastructure features are also crumbling, with a maintenance backlog that has grown to \$11.5 billion due to insufficient construction funding and needed investments in the transportation funding bill.

We call on you to work with the President to resolve issues on budgets and other national issues without imposing unjustified, unnecessary pain on the rest of the nation, including for our parks and other public lands. We also call on you to reinvest in our national treasures for the centennial year and beyond.

Sincerely,

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Alcatraz Cruises  
American Alliance of Museums  
American Association for Nude Recreation  
American Bus Association  
American History Association

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