



NEW JERSEY LEGISLATURE

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April 28, 2022

U.S. Senator Robert Menendez
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U.S. Senator Cory Booker
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U.S. Representative Tom Malinowski
Somerville Office
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U.S. Representative Mikie Sherrill
Parsippany Office
8 Wood Hollow Road, Suite 203
Parsippany, NJ 07054

Dear New Jersey Congressmembers:

We are writing to you regarding the future of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area (DWGNRA). In light of recent news articles referencing efforts to change the designation of this area to a national park, we wanted to reach out to express our official opposition to the proposal as it is being presented.

In 2016, the National Park Service (NPS) proposed a plan entitled "Vision 2030: A Vision for A Sustainable Future" which first officially promoted the idea of expanding the scope of the present recreation area. The NPS subsequently conducted hearings and meetings with various stakeholders to gain input. The result was the proposal was met with considerable skepticism and varying concern, and was appropriately shelved.

There are many concerns among those who oppose the revised designation. One major one is that by becoming a national park, the NPS would look to prohibit or restrict allowable recreational activities, including hunting, that are enjoyed by many visitors. Current efforts to reanimate this plan have only reignited these same concerns, especially in the sportsmen community.

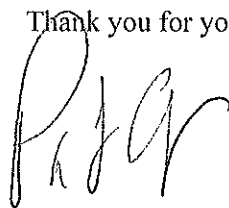
Another major concern deals with farming. What are to become of the tracts of land along the Delaware River which are leased to farmers? Currently these lands produce crops such as corn and soybeans, which mainly go to feeding livestock. Losing this farmland will disrupt the local economy and food chain.

Finally, there are concerns over private property and state-owned parks and forests and the fear that eminent domain would be used not only to acquire private property, but also the aspect of the federal government acquiring High Point State Park, Stokes State Forest, and Worthington State Forest. Not only do we want to protect the rights of property owners, including the State, but we know that if eminent domain were used to acquire privately-owned property, the loss of property tax revenue would also directly impact our local school systems, whose federal Impact Aid has been significantly decreasing every year.

As state representatives whose district encompasses a large portion of the national recreation area, we share these concerns. A designation change that translates into prohibitions and restrictions on currently allowable activities in the recreation area would have a tremendous impact on our region. Most directly, local businesses would suffer as tourists would be enticed to other venues that are more permissible to these activities. In addition, the fears of area residents, who either remember the 1960's and 1970's condemnation of private property by the federal government or those who are descendants, are very real.

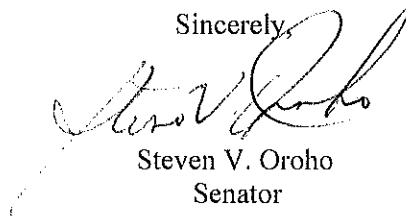
We realize that the DWGNRA is a vital component of our tourism-heavy regional economy. For our many constituents as well as the numerous visitors from throughout our state and country who enjoy the great recreational opportunities that are available within the environs of the recreation area, we look to keep its present designation so it remains welcoming to all current activities.

Thank you for your kind attention.

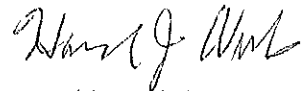


F. Parker Space
Assemblyman

Sincerely,



Steven V. Oroho
Senator



Harold J. Wirths
Assemblyman

cc: Deb Haaland, United States Secretary of the Interior
Sula Jacobs, DWGNRA Superintendent