

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 29, 2022

The Honorable Deb Haaland  
Secretary of the Interior  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Haaland,

We are writing to applaud you for your work on the Secretarial Order 3407 and urge the expedited phasing out of single use plastics, specifically in our National Park Service. By phasing out the sale and distribution of single-use plastic, NPS will be able to greatly reduce plastic pollution within our nation's most beloved places while also advancing President Biden's executive order on federal sustainability (EO 14057).<sup>1</sup>

Since 1916, NPS has safeguarded the invaluable natural and cultural resources of America's national parks and shared them with millions of visitors every year. Unfortunately, these treasured places are often inundated with plastic pollution. With more than 300 million people visiting America's national parks each year, park staff manage approximately 70 million tons of trash.<sup>2</sup> In 2011, the National Park Service issued Policy Memo 11-03 that allowed parks to voluntarily eliminate the sale of disposable plastic water bottles. Unfortunately, this policy was subsequently reversed in 2017 by the Trump administration, even after NPS found that the plastic water bottle elimination programs were widely successful. A 2017 NPS report demonstrated that before its reversal, this policy diverted between 1.3 million and 2 million disposable plastic water bottles from entering our national parks, saving up to 111,743 pounds of plastic and 141 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions.<sup>3</sup> This report clearly demonstrates the positive implications of reducing plastic bottle waste and exemplifies the significant positive impacts a phaseout of single-use plastics can have in our national parks.

A recent national poll shows that 82% of voting Americans support ending the sale and distribution of single-use plastic in our national parks.<sup>4</sup> Last July, over 300 American businesses and organizations sent you a letter requesting that the NPS adopt a new policy to phase out single-use plastics in national parks.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, there is growing support in Congress for legislative solutions which would direct NPS to develop a plan for phasing out the sale and distribution of single-use plastic, such as the Reducing Waste in National Parks Act (H.R. 5533/S.2960) which currently has over 50 cosponsors in the House.

---

<sup>1</sup> [Executive Order 14057](#): Catalyzing America's Clean Energy Economy Through Federal Sustainability (Federal Sustainability Plan). Presidential Initiatives. 2021.

<sup>2</sup> "Teaming up to keep park waste out of landfills." The National Park Service. 2022.

<sup>3</sup> "Disposable Plastic Water Bottle Recycling and Reduction Program Evaluation Report." National Park Service. 2017.

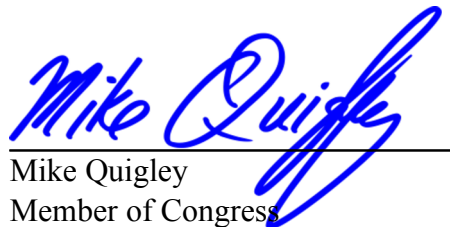
<sup>4</sup> "Oceana Single-Use Plastic and National Parks Survey." Oceana. 2022.

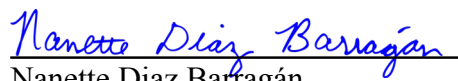
<sup>5</sup> (2021) Business and Organization Sign-On Letter to Secretary Deb Haaland. Oceana.


[https://usa.oceana.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2021/07/22/letter\\_to\\_secretary\\_haaland\\_on\\_plastic\\_pollution\\_7.22.21\\_final96.pdf](https://usa.oceana.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2021/07/22/letter_to_secretary_haaland_on_plastic_pollution_7.22.21_final96.pdf) Accessed May 23, 2022.

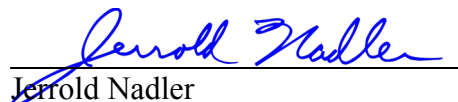
While we commend your leadership on these issues, we urge you to prioritize the phase out of single use plastics in NPS. We understand the 10-year timeline may be important when considering current contractual obligations and appropriate alternatives for plastic items you currently use. We urge you to move as swiftly as possible to implement the phase out plan within NPS, where the preservation of unimpaired natural resources is central to its mission. We must protect our national parks from plastic pollution if we hope to share these special places with generations to come. It is imperative that NPS prioritizes a policy to eliminate the use of single-use plastics in our national parks. Thank you for your service in protecting our national treasures. We look forward to working together in preserving our parks for generations to come.


Sincerely,


  
Mike Quigley  
Member of Congress


  
Nanette Diaz Barragán  
Member of Congress


  
Donald S. Beyer Jr.  
Member of Congress

  
Jerrold Nadler  
Member of Congress

  
Emanuel Cleaver, II  
Member of Congress

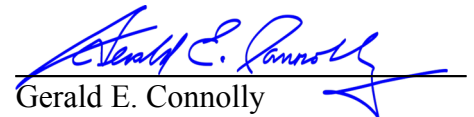
  
Alan S. Lowenthal  
Member of Congress

  
Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress




---

Sean Casten  
Member of Congress



---

Gerald E. Connolly  
Member of Congress



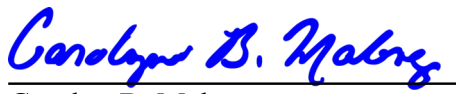
---

Peter Welch  
Member of Congress



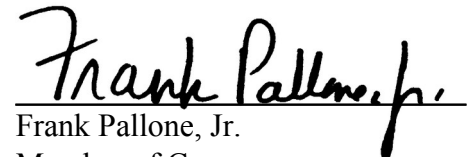
---

Mike Doyle  
Member of Congress




---

Carolyn B. Maloney  
Member of Congress



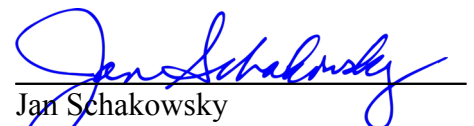
---

Frank Pallone, Jr.  
Member of Congress




---

Mark Pocan  
Member of Congress



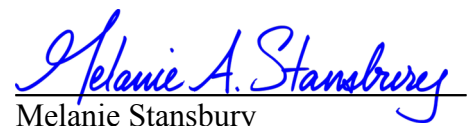
---

Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress



---

Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress



---

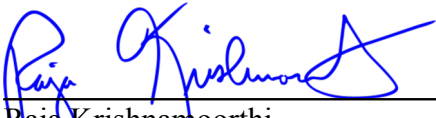
Melanie Stansbury  
Member of Congress



Jamie Raskin  
Member of Congress



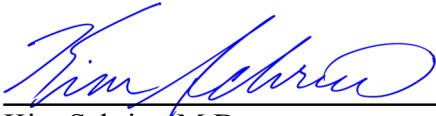
Diana DeGette  
Member of Congress



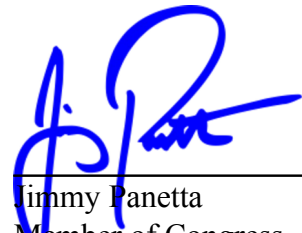
Raja Krishnamoorthi  
Member of Congress



Ann McLane Kuster  
Member of Congress



Kim Schrier, M.D.  
Member of Congress



Jimmy Panetta  
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman  
Member of Congress



Ted W. Lieu  
Member of Congress



Derek Kilmer  
Member of Congress

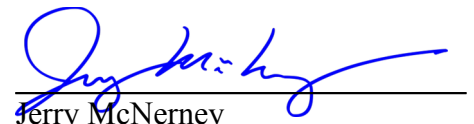


Paul D. Tonko  
Member of Congress




---

Debbie Dingell  
Member of Congress



---

Jerry McNerney  
Member of Congress



---

Zoe Lofgren  
Member of Congress