

June 30, 2008

The Honorable Dirk Kempthorne
Secretary of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

RE: Statement of Support for National Park Service's current firearm regulations 36 CFR 2.4 (a)(2)

Dear Secretary Kempthorne:

We the undersigned organizations, groups and individuals representing more than 500,000 people, submit the following comments on the National Park Service's proposed changes to its firearm regulations. We have seen no evidence supporting any alteration of the current rules, and as such fully support their preservation. The rules, adopted during the Reagan administration, are reasonable measures merely requiring gun owners to unload and stow their weapons including handguns and rifles.

Our businesses, families and communities are much dependent upon the National Park Service providing parks that are safe and family friendly. Allowing loaded firearms will greatly undermine the current park atmosphere, threaten public safety, and damage wildlife.

National Parks are some of the safest places in the world. According to the National Park Service, the probability of becoming a victim of a violent crime in a national park is less likely than being struck by lightning over one's lifetime. Meanwhile, gutting the rules would likely lead to increased opportunity for wildlife poaching, more shooting accidents and injuries and diminished visitor enjoyment.

There has been no public outcry supporting a change in these rules. Rather, park visitors are showing their support for the current rules with their feet. Last year, in fact, more than 275 million people visited the national parks.

In an election year move, the National Rifle Association (NRA) is pushing for changes based on a flawed understanding of the rule's impact. The NRA and its allies are fanning hysteria by asserting that guns are "prohibited" in national parks. This is not true.

We the undersigned believe sound public policy must be based on fact and reason. Rule changes built on emotion and misinformation will lead to bad decisions, ultimately harming the public good, our businesses, communities and families.

Therefore, we back the current Park Service firearm regulations and support their full retention.

Sincerely,

The Honorable Greg Nickels
Mayor of Seattle
Seattle, WA

Chief R. Gil Kerlikowske
Seattle Police Department
Seattle, WA

The Honorable Sherry V. Appleton
Washington State House
Poulsbo, WA

The Honorable Jeanne Kohl-Welles
Washington State Senate
Seattle, WA

The Honorable Jeannie Darneille
Washington State House
Fife, WA

The Honorable Ross Hunter
Washington State House
Bellevue, WA

The Honorable Jamie Pedersen
Washington State House
Seattle, WA

The Honorable Brendan W. Williams
Washington State House
Olympia, WA

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Portland, OR

The Honorable Mary Lou Dickerson
Washington State House
Seattle, WA

The Honorable Phyllis Gutierrez Kenney
Washington State House
Seattle, WA

The Honorable Jim Moeller
Washington State House
Vancouver, WA

The Honorable Shay Schual-Berke
Washington State House
Des Moines, WA

The Honorable Ginny Burdick
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