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**Committee on Appropriations**  
**Washington, DC 20515-6015**

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February 12, 2025

The Honorable Doug Burgum  
Secretary U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Burgum:

I am writing to express my opposition to the National Park Service (NPS) hiring freeze and urge you to immediately resume all seasonal hiring. The National Park system relies on its seasonal workforce to safely and successfully operate parks for more than 325 million annual visitors. Seasonal workers provide an important function throughout the National Park system, from collecting entrance fees to maintaining visitor amenities, such as campsites and bathrooms, to providing education and protecting public safety.

It was recently reported<sup>1</sup> that the Department will grant an exemption for seasonal hiring of NPS law enforcement. This recognition of the harm caused by the ill-conceived freeze is an important first step, but the waiver must be expanded. Seasonal hiring must resume immediately or the damage to national parks and the economies of their gateway communities will be widespread.

As the Ranking Member and former Chair of the subcommittee responsible for funding the National Park Service, I am acutely aware of the ongoing challenge to provide sufficient resources for the parks. In fiscal year 2024, the annual appropriation to operate the park system was \$2.9 billion. In addition to this, parks collected nearly \$500 million through fees.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2025/02/11/parks-hiring-freeze-exemptions/>

In my home state of Maine, Acadia National Park annually collects \$12 million of revenue from entrance fees. Due to your hiring freeze, dozens of seasonal placements for fee collectors were rescinded. The same thing is happening in parks across the country.

Foregoing collection of entrance fees means that Congress will have to appropriate an additional half of a billion dollars to make up for the shortfall. Perversely, you are increasing costs for the taxpayer and adding to the deficit with your hiring freeze.

I urge you to swiftly direct NPS to fully resume seasonal hiring.

Sincerely,



Chellie Pingree  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies  
House Committee on Appropriations