

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 22, 2026

Jessica Bowron
Acting Director
National Park Service (NPS)
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Acting Director Bowron:

We write to request that National Park Service (NPS) immediately adjust its grant review process to address a reported 1,400 active grant approval backlog.¹ According to public reports, NPS currently requires all grants and cooperative agreements valued at \$50,000 or above to be manually reviewed by two political appointees. Those appointees serve at the department level and are not solely tasked with ensuring timely review of NPS grants and agreements, creating a severe bottleneck that has left more than \$360 million in NPS funding behind schedule.

These delays are unacceptable. Nonprofit programs to clear trails have been delayed at the critical start of peak visitation season, while prescribed burns and other wildfire control programs are at risk of the same fate during peak wildfire risk season. Ensuring that those and similarly routine programs are funded during critical times of the year should be part of the regular operation of the National Park System. Choosing to make such grants contingent on review by unqualified political appointees puts the safety of the American people at risk, whether they choose to visit our national parks or simply live near them.

During the first Trump administration, the Government Accountability Office investigated DOI's grants review process that was also run through an unqualified political appointee.² They found that the appointee, an old football friend of then-Secretary of the Interior, Ryan Zinke, centralized grants review for all bureaus at DOI. He "closely scrutinized applications focused on certain topics, such as endangered species and climate change, rather than considering the merit of individual grant applications or program policy factors, such as leveraging resources between similar programs." When he rejected grants, he kept his decisions off the books, hiding the truth from the American people and suggesting willful malfeasance.

The NPS decision bears striking similarities to other manual review processes that have been rolled back at the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Last year, DHS instituted a manual grant review process that – similar to the reported NPS process – required additional review above a value

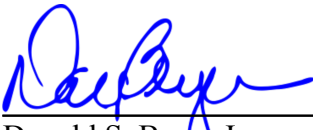
¹ Eric Katz & Anna Kramer, *Political Reviews Are Causing a Huge Grant Backlog at the National Park Service*, Notus, June 9, 2026, <https://www.notus.org/climate-environment/political-reviews-grant-backlog-national-park-service>

² U.S. Gov't Accountability Office, *Grants Management: Interior Should Improve the Award Process for Some Competitive Grant Programs*, GAO22105407, Aug. 23, 2022, <https://www.gao.gov/assets/d22105407.pdf>

threshold. That process delayed more than 1,000 FEMA contracts, grants, and disaster assistance awards.³ The delays came amid historic flooding in Texas⁴ and in the heart of the Atlantic hurricane season. After repeated findings that the process violated federal court orders,⁵ the DHS approval system was rolled back earlier this year.

We urge you to do the same at NPS, while also providing a full accounting of the current NPS grant and cooperative agreement backlog. It is a core responsibility of NPS to ensure that routine, lifesaving programs are funded on time and in full, while offering full transparency on the status of any delayed approvals. We request an update on NPS' plans for its grant review process, as well as a full list of all grants and cooperative agreements in the approval backlog, no later than August 5, 2026.

Sincerely,



Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



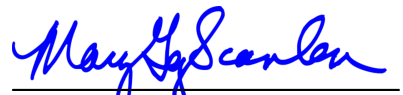
Robert Garcia
Member of Congress



Suhas Subramanyam
Member of Congress



Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress



Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress

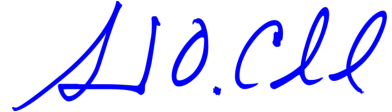
³ Scott Dance, *Noem's DHS Spending Review Has Delayed FEMA Disaster Aid*, N.Y. Times, Mar. 4, 2026, <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/03/04/climate/noem-dhs-fema-delays.html>

⁴ Maxine Joselow, *FEMA Didn't Answer Thousands of Calls From Flood Survivors, Documents Show*, N.Y. Times, July 11, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/07/11/climate/fema-missed-calls-texas-floods.html>

⁵ Zach Schonfeld, *Judge Finds FEMA Withholding Grants in Violation of Court Order*, The Hill, Apr. 4, 2025, <https://thehill.com/regulation/court-battles/5232494-judge-fema-grants-trump-blue-states>



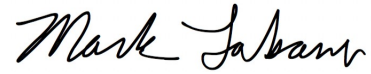
Laura Friedman
Member of Congress



Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress



Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress



Mark Takano
Member of Congress



Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



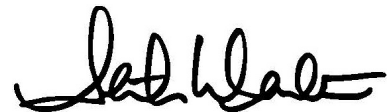
Diana DeGette
Member of Congress



Dave Min
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



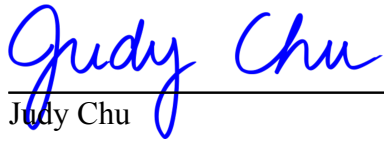
Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



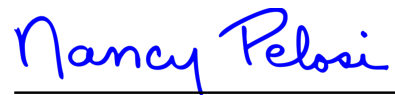
Mike Thompson
Member of Congress



Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress



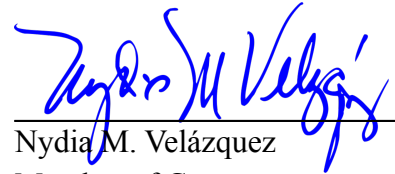
Judy Chu
Member of Congress



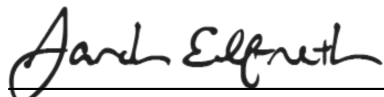
Nancy Pelosi
Member of Congress



Melanie Stansbury
Member of Congress



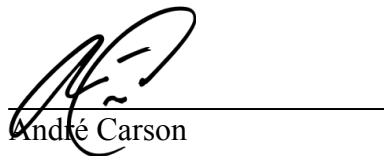
Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



Sarah Elfreth
Member of Congress



Dina Titus
Member of Congress



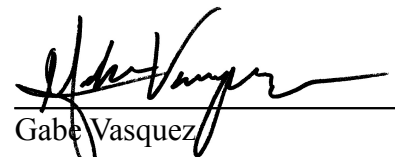
André Carson
Member of Congress



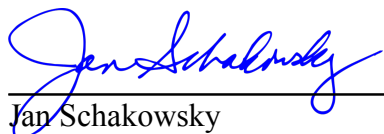
Lateefah Simon
Member of Congress



Madeleine Dean
Member of Congress



Gabe Vasquez
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress



Pablo José Hernández
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Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



Seth Magaziner
Member of Congress



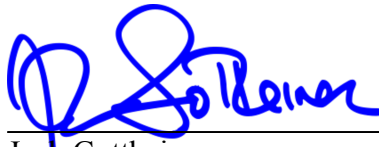
Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress



Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



Joe Neguse
Member of Congress



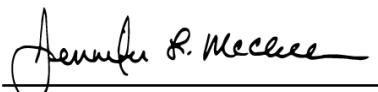
Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress



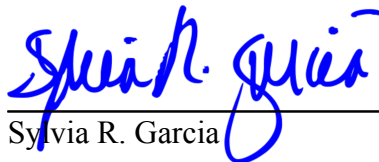
Jim Tokuda
Member of Congress



Adelita S. Grijalva
Member of Congress



Jennifer L. McClellan
Member of Congress



Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



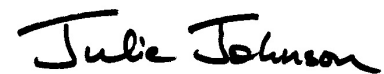
Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



Kim Schrier, M.D.
Member of Congress



Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress



Julie Johnson
Member of Congress



Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress



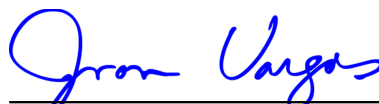
Ed Case
Member of Congress



Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



Jim Costa
Member of Congress



Juan Vargas
Member of Congress



Raul Ruiz, M.D.
Member of Congress



Mike Quigley
Member of Congress



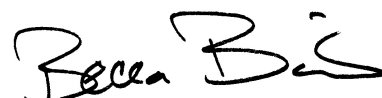
Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress



Angie Craig
Member of Congress



Jasmine Crockett
Member of Congress



Becca Balint
Member of Congress



Sara Jacobs
Member of Congress



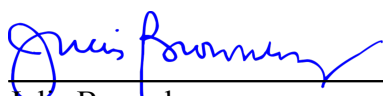
Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress



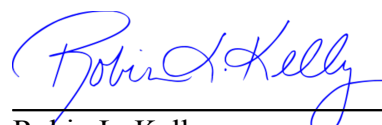
Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress



Kelly Morrison
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



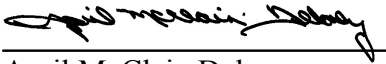
Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress



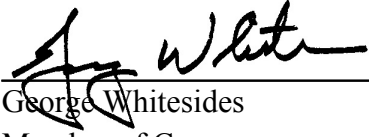
Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



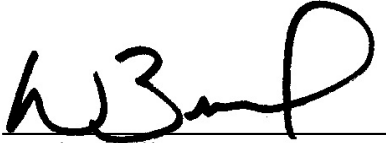
Herbert C. Conaway, Jr.
Member of Congress



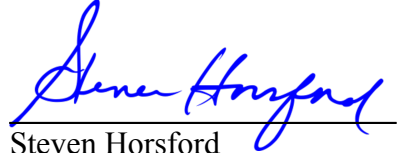
April McClain Delaney
Member of Congress



George Whitesides
Member of Congress



Wesley Bell
Member of Congress



Steven Horsford
Member of Congress
Nevada's Fourth
Congressional District



Jared Moskowitz
Member of Congress



John Garamendi
Member of Congress