

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 14, 2022

Charles F. Sams III  
Director  
National Park Service  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC. 20240

Dear Director Sams,

We write to request a briefing for the Senate National Parks Subcommittee members and their staff on the increase in National Park visitation and its impact to the park units, staff, and local communities. With the number of visitors dramatically increasing over the last ten years at top destination park units, it is important that we are made aware of the impacts, both positive and negative, so the committee can better address the situation.

This past July, Yellowstone National Park hit a milestone by having 1 million visitors in a single month, and overall annual visitation has increased from 3,640,185 in 2010 to 4,860,242 in 2021. Acadia National Park also saw major increases from 2,504,208 to 4,069,098 over the same time period. As international and domestic travel begins to ramp up after the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, we expect this trend to continue. We should continue to encourage visitation to all of our national park units, however, as visitation increases, it is important we know the scope of what the impact is.

Therefore, we respectfully ask that you present to the Senate National Parks Subcommittee a briefing that provides the following:

- An overview of park visitation trends at highly visited parks
- An overview of staffing trends at highly visited parks
- An overview of staffing morale, housing, and retention at highly visited parks
- What parks, if any, are experiencing visitation that is unmanageable by the park
- What parks, if any, are implementing new policies to adjust to visitation increases
- What the National Park Service is doing to encourage visitation at lesser visited park units, and any limitations on the National Park Service from encouraging visitation to other federal or state public recreation areas.

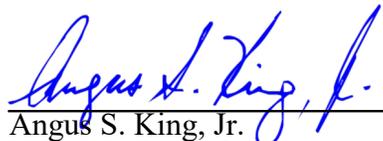
Our National Parks system is one of our nation's greatest treasures, and as such we must be vigilant in ensuring that they continue to be available for the benefit and enjoyment of the people of this and future generations. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,



Steve Daines

United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.

United States Senator