DATE

The Honorable Patrick J. Toomey

U.S. Senate

258 Russell Senate Office Building

Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Toomey,

I reach out to you today as a business owner in Gettysburg, Pa. I would like to express my opposition to recent policy changes announced by Gettysburg National Military Park (GNMP) that increases the fees for companies that operate tours of the battlefield through Commercial Use Authorizations (CUA).

Currently, businesses that provide tours of GNMP pay $250 every two years through a Commercial Use Authorization (CUA). Like many parks across the United States, GNMP beginning Oct. 1, 2019, will require tour companies to pay, first, a $300 annual fee, and secondly, a percent of their gross annual revenue. While we were able to negotiate an incremental build up, beginning with 1-1.6% in year one, by year three businesses will be required to pay the maximum of 3-5% on their gross annual revenue. By year three, this increase will equate to a 30,000% increase for some Gettysburg businesses.

While the business owners affected by this CUA change agree that more could be collected annually for the CUA, these businesses are providing GNMP with a service to visitors that, itself, doesn’t have the resources to provide.

In addition, the CUA changes, to take effect on October 1, 2019, will require tour groups traveling by motor coach to pay the $300 CUA permit fee in addition to levying $5 per passenger, a move that will deeply impact the group travel business to Gettysburg and national parks nationwide.

National tour group associations such as American Bus Association (ABA), the National Tour Association (NTA), are strongly opposed to this new policy because of its impact on group travel across the United States.

Gettysburg is regularly ranked among the top group travel destinations in the United States. More than 7,500 employees rely on tourism in Adams County, and the group travel business plays a significant part in the nearly $700 million tourism industry.

Both of the changes are likely to have a significant impact on tourism community in Adams County, Pa. Businesses such as mine, regardless of its connection to GNMP, will realize the effects of such increases as visitors inevitably will pay more for the services they receive, and some travelers and tour operators may opt for alternative destinations rather than visit Gettysburg and Adams County.

I ask your support to include language in the appropriations act to require the National Park Service to withdraw the park entrance fee increase and the commercial use authorization permit changes finalized in April 2018, and re-issue both proposals in accordance with federal rules and procedures to ensure a fair and transparent process, inclusive of public input and cost justification.

Please understand, my business as well as the tourism community of Adams County, Pa., support the national park system and want to ensure its vitality. However, proposals to increase fees or change fee structures must be fully justified and developed in accordance with federal rules and procedures, allowing for transparency and proper public input.

Please support language in the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies appropriations bill to direct NPS to withdraw the entrance fee increase and commercial use authorization permit changes and initiate a process in accordance with federal rules and procedures to ensure a fair and transparent process that properly takes into account public input. By pursuing these misguided proposals, NPS only stands to lose more visitors and exacerbate the current fiscal challenges it seeks to address.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

NAME

TITLE

BUSINESS