

**STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS AND PUBLIC LANDS, COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, CONCERNING H.R. 2070, A BILL TO DIRECT THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR TO INSTALL IN THE AREA OF THE WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA A SUITABLE PLAQUE OR INSCRIPTION WITH THE WORDS THAT PRESIDENT FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT PRAYED WITH THE NATION ON JUNE 6, 1944, THE MORNING OF D-DAY.**

**November 3, 2011**

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Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to appear before your committee to present the views of the Department of the Interior on H.R. 2070, a bill which directs the Secretary of the Interior to install in the area of the World War II Memorial in the District of Columbia a suitable plaque or an inscription with the words that President Franklin Delano Roosevelt prayed with the Nation on June 6, 1944, the morning of D-Day.

The Department cannot support H.R. 2070, which essentially proposes adding another commemorative work to the existing World War II Memorial and as such is contrary to the Commemorative Works Act. We support the continued application of this law which, by prohibiting encroachment by a new commemoration on an existing one, respects the design of this completed work of civic art without alteration or addition of new elements.

The World War II Memorial was authorized on May 23, 1993, by Public Law 103-32. In 1994, Congress approved its placement in the area containing the National Mall in Public Law 103-422. Its location at the site of the Rainbow Pool was approved in 1995 by the National Park Service (NPS) on behalf of the Secretary of the Interior, the Commission of Fine Arts (CFA), and the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC). In July 1997, the CFA and the NCPC reaffirmed prior approvals of the Rainbow Pool site in recognition of the significance of World War II as the single-most defining event of the 20th Century for Americans and the world. Even so, there were challenges to the establishment of this memorial. The design we see today was painstakingly arrived upon after years of public deliberations and spirited public debate.

The Commemorative Works Act specifically states that a new commemorative work shall be located so that it does not encroach upon an existing one. It is not a judgment as to the merit of this new commemoration, simply that altering the Memorial in this way, as proposed in H.R. 2070, will necessarily dilute this elegant memorial's central message and its ability to clearly convey that message to move, educate, and inspire its many visitors. The Department strongly believes that the World War II Memorial, as designed, accomplishes its legislated purpose to honor the members of the Armed Forces who served in World War II and to commemorate the participation of the United States in that conflict. It should not be altered in the manner suggested by H.R. 2070.

The views of the Department are consistent with those of the National Capital Memorial Advisory Commission, which reviewed this proposal at its meeting on September 14, 2011, and with the views of the American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) which was also represented at that same meeting. The ABMC, charged by the Congress in Public Law 103-32 to design and build the World War II Memorial, concurred that no additional elements should be inserted into this carefully designed Memorial.

That concludes our prepared testimony on H.R. 2070, and we would be happy to answer any questions you may have.