

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ryan Zinke
Secretary of the Interior
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

July 7, 2017

Dear Secretary Zinke:

We are writing to request the National Park Service (NPS) end its current policy allowing individual park units to ban the sale of bottled water, as established by Policy Memorandum 11-03 (PM 11-03), *Disposable Plastic Water Bottle Recycling and Reduction*, on December 14, 2011.

Since 2011, the Administration allowed more than twenty individual units of the National Park System to ban the sale of bottled water in plastic containers. This policy discriminates against a single type of packaged beverage product for symbolic reasons, rather than addressing all packaged beverage containers.

Policy Memorandum 11-03 emphasizes recycling, waste reduction, a commitment to monitoring waste, and for continual improvement. Yet, it remains unclear what, if any, efforts the parks and the NPS have undertaken to evaluate this policy and justify continuing it. In fact, the NPS has admitted that park units that have implemented bottled water sales bans are not tracking and reporting the impacts of those bans in a way that allows for any post-ban analysis. Consequently, there is no available data demonstrating whether the policy is successful in reducing waste, bringing about a net reduction of plastic bottles in parks, or if the bans may be impacting visitor health and safety.

It is not clear that even the most basic requirements of this policy for tracking and evaluating the bans' effects have been implemented. For instance, there is no evidence the systems for annual evaluation that each unit was required to develop as a condition for approval to eliminate bottled water sales distinguishes water bottles from other materials in monitoring collection rates.

Moreover, failing to consider impacts that may occur after implementation of a sales ban may actually increase the waste stream. An offsetting increase in plastic waste is possible because of packaged beverage sales other than water (e.g., sodas, juices, energy drinks, and flavored and enhanced water). A study by University of Vermont nutrition professor Rachel Johnson found

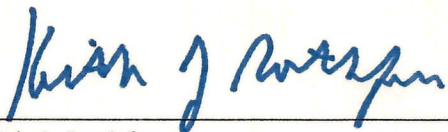
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that eliminating bottled water sales on campus actually drove up the total number of single-use bottles sold as students, faculty and visitors turned to other less healthy options. This policy runs counter to the National Park Service's own policies encouraging Americans and park visitors to make healthier food and beverage choices. As the policy specifically recognizes, banning the sale of bottled water in the parks "runs counter to [NPS's] healthy food initiative as it eliminates the healthiest choice for bottled drinks, leaving sugary drinks as a primary alternative."

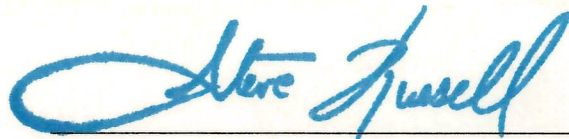
Without an adequate monitoring and evaluation program to confirm actual benefits and reach defined policy goals, this program cannot be characterized as anything but bad policy. We ask that you immediately terminate and withdraw PM 11-03, and restore bottled water sales at all park units that provide the sale of packaged beverages.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We look forward to continuing to work with you to protect America's National Parks in a way that ensures the health and safety of all park visitors, and enhances the public's use and enjoyment of the parks.

Sincerely,



Keith J. Rothfus
Member of Congress



Steve Russell
Member of Congress



Glenn 'GT' Thompson
Member of Congress



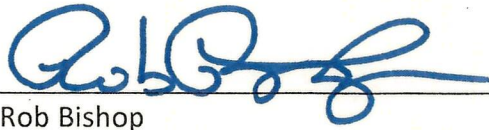
Chuck Fleischmann
Member of Congress



Steve Pearce
Member of Congress



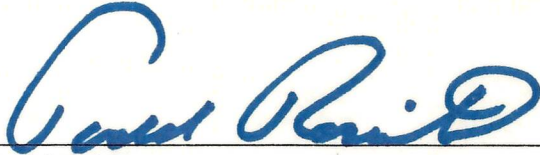
Chris Stewart
Member of Congress



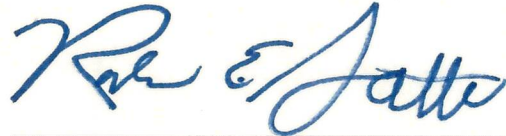
Rob Bishop
Member of Congress



Tom McClintock
Member of Congress



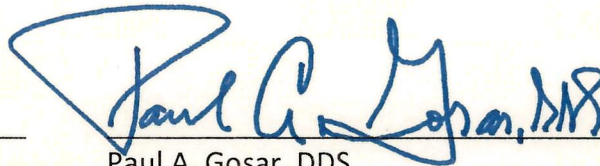
Todd Rokita
Member of Congress



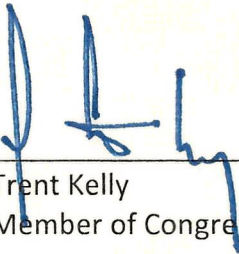
Robert E. Latta
Member of Congress



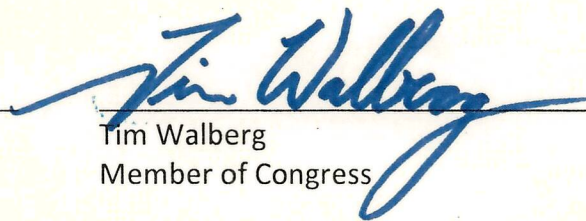
Phil Roe, MD
Member of Congress



Paul A. Gosar, DDS
Member of Congress



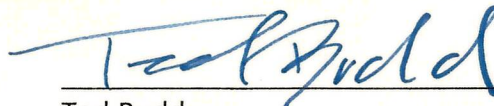
Trent Kelly
Member of Congress



Tim Walberg
Member of Congress



Drew Ferguson IV, DMD
Member of Congress



Ted Budd
Member of Congress



Sean P. Duffy
Member of Congress



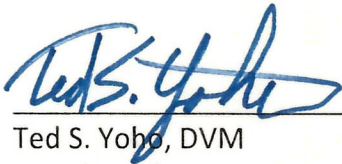
Chris Collins
Member of Congress



Paul Mitchell
Member of Congress



Rick Allen
Member of Congress



Ted S. Yoho, DVM
Member of Congress

CC: Representative Rodney P. Frelinghuysen, Chair of the House Committee on Appropriations
Representative Nita Lowey, Ranking Member of the House Committee on Appropriations
Representative Rob Bishop, Chair of the House Committee on Natural Resources
Representative Raúl Grijalva, Ranking Member of the House Committee on Natural Resources
Representative Ken Calvert, Chair of the House Interior Appropriations Committee
Representative Betty McCollum, Ranking Member of the House Interior Appropriations Committee
Representative Tom McClintock, Chair of the House Federal Lands Committee
Representative Colleen Hanabusa, Ranking Member of the House Federal Lands Committee
Senator Thad Cochran, Chair of the Senate Committee on Appropriations
Senator Patrick Leahy, Vice Chair of the Senate Committee on Appropriations
Senator Lisa Murkowski, Chair of the Senate Committee on Energy & Natural Resources, and Chair of the Senate Interior Appropriations Committee
Senator Maria Cantwell, Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Energy & Natural Resources
Senator Tom Udall, Ranking Member of the Senate Interior Appropriations Committee
Senator Steve Daines, Chair of the Senate National Parks Committee
Senator Mazie Hirono, Ranking Member of the Senate National Parks Committee