

U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, DC 20515

May 21, 2026

The Honorable Bruce Westerman
Chair, House Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chair:

As you have seen, Donald Trump has spent the last 7 months tearing down historic sites and eviscerating public spaces to build a series of vanity projects using taxpayer dollars. This committee has been asleep at the wheel, despite the fact that we have jurisdiction over these projects and a responsibility to conduct oversight. My Democratic colleagues and I have launched our own investigations and used our platform as members of this committee to shed light on Trump's illegal actions, and we would like you to finally join us. We write to request an oversight hearing on the President's proposed vanity projects: the White House Ballroom, Independence Arch, Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool, Garden of American Heroes, East Potomac Golf Course, and others.

Throughout Washington, D.C., the Trump administration has subverted transparency and statutory review processes, engaged billionaire donors with business before the federal government, imperiled the National Park Service's integrity, politicized leasing authority, issued secretive, no-bid contracts, and dramatically and repeatedly expanded project budgets and scopes. These projects merit rigorous congressional oversight and as the relevant authorizing committee, the Committee on Natural Resources has the responsibility to conduct this important work.

Pursuant to Rule X of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee on Natural Resources (Committee) has broad jurisdiction over public lands, the National Park Service (NPS), parks within the District of Columbia, and monuments erected therein. In fact, the Committee's Republican-drafted Authorization and Oversight Plan for the 119th Congress commits that "Congress is responsible for keeping the government accountable to the American people, ensuring decisions by agencies are open and transparent and the effective stewardship of taxpayers' money."¹ Without robust congressional oversight and involvement, the seemingly non-stop and ever-growing list of vanity projects in our nation's capital could completely and irreversibly destroy treasured, historical sites across D.C. and clear the way for future presidents to continue violating the law.

First and foremost, all these projects fall within the Reserve or Area I designated by the Commemorative Works Act (CWA).² Without consulting Congress or seeking the required approval, the administration is in violation of the statute and must be held accountable. The CWA

¹ U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources. *Authorization and Oversight Plan 119th Congress*.
<https://docs.house.gov/meetings/11/II00/20250212/117843/HMKP-119-II00-20250212-SD002.pdf>

² Congressional Research Service. *Commemorative Works Act: Siting Memorials in the District of Columbia*. September 23, 2024.
<https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/IF11937>

is designed to protect against this type of executive overreach to ensure that the National Mall and the monuments and memorials reflect shared and unified values.

Historic and cultural sites in the District of Columbia, including the White House and the National Mall, belong to the American people and are not private property subject to the whims of the President. Any substantial modification to these sites must be handled with transparency, ethical integrity, congressional authorization, and full compliance with the law. Despite these critical requirements, the Trump administration has repeatedly ignored statutory requirements, and President Trump, Secretary Burgum, NPS, and the Trust for the National Mall have yet to respond to requests for information. They must answer the Committees' questions regarding fundraising, donation vetting, statutory review process, and project budget, scope, and operational costs.

American Democracy is built upon a system of checks and balances. Congress must provide a check on this administration and conduct rigorous oversight of these unlawful projects.

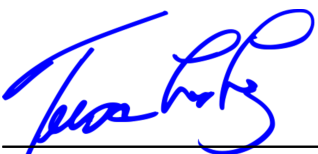
We strongly urge you to exercise the Committee's oversight authority to work with us to thoroughly examine the President's vanity projects. The breathtaking scope of these changes to iconic structures and spaces in our nation's capital – changes that will transform the experience of visiting and using the capital for generations to come – demands at least a hearing by the Committee. If Republicans support these dramatic changes and the tremendous cost associated with them, the American people deserve to hear an explanation. A public oversight hearing is the first place to start.

We look forward to your prompt action and encourage your staff to coordinate with the Democratic staff of the Natural Resources Committee in scheduling an oversight hearing.

Sincerely,

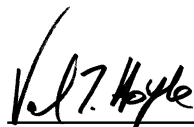

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Val Hoyle
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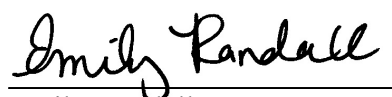
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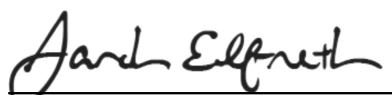
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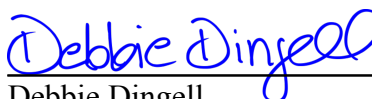
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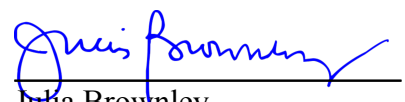


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