

**House Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands**  
**Hearing on HR 6305, a bill to clarify the authorities for the use of certain National Park Service properties within Golden Gate National Parks and San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park, and for other purposes.**

**July 15, 2008**

**Statement of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi**

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony on H.R. 6305, a bill to clarify the authorities for the use of certain National Park Service properties within Golden Gate National Parks and San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park, and for other purposes.

Section 1 of H.R. 6305 addresses longstanding authority at Golden Gate National Recreation Area and the San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park to spend revenue generated from certain properties for the maintenance of park property.

This section would enable the National Park Service to more effectively manage these properties by ensuring that the revenue from those properties could be used for multi-year rehabilitation and maintenance projects. With the ability to retain revenues over a longer period of time, the parks can enter into long-term rehabilitation and maintenance contracts. Section 1 would also provide a modest boundary adjustment between the two areas, moving the Municipal Pier from the jurisdiction of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area to the San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park.

Section 2 of H.R. 6305 addresses a name change for Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Changing the designation of Golden Gate from a National Recreation Area to a National Park will establish the United States' 59<sup>th</sup> National Park, the highest National Park Service designation. The Golden Gate Recreation Area is deserving of the National Park designation because it is truly one of our nation's natural treasures. The Golden Gate National Parks offer unparalleled natural beauty in an unlikely setting close to a major metropolitan area. Encompassing almost 60 miles of bay and ocean shoreline, the Golden Gate National Parks also offer visitors access to an amazingly diverse natural area, including windswept beaches, salt-water marshes, and stunning cliffs. The Parks also contain expansive forests and coastal lands, such as Sweeney Ridge in San Mateo County and the world's only coastal old-growth redwood forest in Muir Woods in Marin.

Section 2 also makes clear that while the park will be administered as a National Park, it shall be referred to in government documents as the Golden Gate National Parks. This name accurately reflects the fact that there are distinct and geographically separated parks within the park unit. Since its establishment, the park units that comprise the GGNRA have been referred to as Golden Gate National Parks, and this terminology has become widely used and accepted. Furthermore, the name Golden Gate National Parks will help distinguish the national park from the municipal park, Golden Gate Park, a distinction supported by San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom.

While Section 2 changes the designation of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area to a National Park, all entities currently operating within the recreation area will continue to be managed in accordance with the park's establishing legislation. All park units are managed in the same manner, whether they are designated as a national park or national recreation area or any other designation, and the Golden Gate National Parks will be managed under precisely the same laws and regulations as before. Furthermore, the intent of this legislation is not to transfer from the Presidio Trust to the National Park Service the administration of the Presidio.

In the years since the establishment of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area almost 40 years ago, the park units have collectively been referred to as Golden Gate National Parks. As natural and historic sites have been added to this park system, the need has grown to recognize the system of parks for what they are, which is one of our nation's great natural treasures.

Section 3 of H.R. 6305 addresses a number of changes to concerning the Presidio Trust, which was established by Congress in 1996 to preserve the Presidio's natural, scenic, cultural, and recreational resources.

Recognizing the Presidio Trust's integral role in the formation and operation of the Presidio, this legislation expands the role of the Presidio Trust to include interpretive services, visitor orientation, and educational programs. To ensure that visitors receive the highest quality educational programs, the legislation also expands the qualifications for service on the Presidio Trust Board of Directors to include education and program development.

This legislation also gives the Presidio Trust and the Superintendent of the GGNRA the flexibility to identify an alternate building for the Presidio's visitor center. The authorizing legislation that created the Presidio established Building 102 as the location for the visitor center. However, Building 102 has been closed since 2001 seismic retrofitting. The retrofitting and rehabilitation of Building 102 will prolong the period that the park will be without a permanent visitor center. By removing references to Building 102 and adding a requirement that the new visitor center be in a high visibility space and its location agreed to by both the Trust and the Superintendent of the GGNRA, I am confident that the increasing numbers of visitors to the Presidio will have a prominent and permanent visitor center that is both accessible to visitors and affordable to the Presidio Trust.

Section 3 also contains language concerning the Presidio Trust's responsibility to provide for law enforcement in the Presidio. Under the current law, costs for the US Park Police above the amount provided in the Presidio Trust's annual appropriation must be covered by the Trust. However, the Trust has limited control over increases in the Park Police budget, which has placed a heavy burden on the Trust's limited financial resources and used funds that could be invested in revitalizing Presidio buildings. This provision would remove the requirement that the Trust pay for United States Park Police law enforcement activities from the Trust's appropriated funds.

Section 3 of HR 6305 also removes the reversion clause requiring that the Presidio be transferred to the General Services Administration and sold, should it not achieve financial self-sufficiency. The presence of the reversion clause deters investment in the Presidio by individuals and organizations and is antithetical to the spirit of the public-private partnership on which the Presidio was established and continues to operate.

The section also changes the date for a Government Accountability Office study from seven years after the first meeting of the Trust Board to twelve years, which would be in 2010. A National Academy of Public Administration's review of the Trust conducted in 2003 eliminated the need for a concurrent GAO study at that time. I look forward receiving the findings from the GAO report in 2010 and working with the Trust to see that the suggestions made in that report are implemented.

This third section creates a Fort Scott Advisory Task Force to advise on the transformation of the former artillery post into as a center for education, research and policy development. The provision determines membership, rules regarding vacancies, the purpose of the task force, the compensation and expenses of members and the termination date for the task force.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of this legislation. The Golden Gate National Parks offer residents of my district and the Bay Area, as well as visitors from across the country and around the world the opportunity to connect with nature and experience our nation's history close to a major urban center. Rewarding the Golden Gate National Parks with the national park designation, will ensure that the space is revered as a place natural beauty and recreational opportunity well in the future.

I would be glad to work with the committee on any amendments that may be needed to clarify the provisions currently included in the bill.