

TESTIMONY OF INGRID KOLB
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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS AND PUBLIC LANDS
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, my name is Ingrid Kolb. I serve as the Director, Office of Management at the U.S. Department of Energy. As part of our programmatic responsibilities, the Office of Management coordinates cultural resources and historic preservation activities across the Department and is the lead office coordinating DOE participation in the proposed Manhattan Project National Historical Park. I am pleased to be here today to discuss the proposed park and H.R. 5987, a bill to establish the Manhattan Project National Historical Park.

The Manhattan Project National Park Study Act, Public Law 108-340, directed the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the Secretary of Energy, to conduct a special resource study to determine the feasibility of designating one or more Manhattan Project sites as a unit of the National Park Service. A park, the legislation noted, would have to be compatible with “maintaining the security, productivity, and management goals of the Department of Energy,” as well as public health and safety. In preparing the study, the Department’s Office of Management was an active partner with the National Park Service, and its staff participated fully, providing information, input, and comments.

Following public meetings at the sites, extensive assessments of potential park boundaries and integrity of historical resources, the Department and the National Park Service agreed that a park was feasible, met the suitability requirement for creating a new park, and should be established. In October 2010, National Park Service Director concurred on the study, which contained the recommendation for a three-site park in Oak Ridge Tennessee, Hanford, Washington, and Los Alamos, New Mexico, in partnership with the Department of Energy. The Department of Energy would continue to manage and maintain its properties and control access to them. The National Park Service would

provide interpretation, consult with the Department on preservation issues, and establish a visitor center and station rangers in each of the three communities. In March 2011, the Deputy Secretary of Energy concurred on the findings of the study and provided assurances to the National Park Service that the Department would retain full access control to its properties in accordance with its missions and security requirements. “The Department of Energy is proud of its Manhattan Project heritage and recognizes that this partnership with the National Park Service would bring one of the most significant events in 20th century America to a wider public audience.”

The establishment of a National Historical Park will represent a new era for the Department of Energy, particularly in certain areas of our sites that have been largely off-limits to the public to date due to national security concerns and potential impacts to our ongoing missions. The Department has not yet assessed fully the operational difficulties in terms of security and public health and safety, applicable statutory and regulatory requirements, and the potential new cost of national park designation at our sensitive national security and cleanup sites. The proposed legislation, H.R. 5987, would give the Department of Energy and Department of the Interior the flexibility to establish the timeline, boundaries, and a suitable management plan for a National Historical Park that would allow us to ensure the continuance of public safety, national security, and the ongoing missions at our sites. We welcome the leadership of Chairman Hastings and the National Parks, Forests and Public Lands Subcommittee in telling this important story, and we look forward to working with you as this legislation advances.

Again, thank you for this opportunity to testify before the Subcommittee. This completes my prepared statement. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.