

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 14, 2017

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

Dear Secretary Zinke:

We understand from the Acadia National Park Advisory Commission (Acadia Commission) that it has been directed by the Department of Interior's Office of Policy to suspend all meetings until September 1. We were informed that the Department is looking at "institutionalizing state and local input and ongoing collaboration, particularly in communities surrounding public lands," and once the Department has concluded its review, meetings will be able to resume.

While we understand that reviewing the charter of each Board and Advisory Committee is designed to help ensure compliance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act and the President's recent executive orders, we are particularly concerned with suspending meetings of the Acadia Commission at the start of the busy summer season.


The Acadia Commission, established in the 1986 Permanent Boundary Act of Acadia National Park (Acadia), is composed of representatives from the communities surrounding the park and provides an important opportunity for local communication and consultation with Acadia officials. Held regularly, the meetings facilitate information-sharing across the ten disparate communities connected to the park. All meetings are open to the public, as stated in the group's bylaws, and provide a forum for local residents to ask questions or raise particular concerns that require interaction between local communities and Acadia.


Support for the work of the Acadia Commission is strong. In fact, we have proposed making the commission permanent in legislation we introduced earlier this year. Suspending the Commission's activity, particularly during the busy summer season, would impede the ability of Acadia officials to remain responsive to local concerns. Acadia experiences its highest volume of visitors to its 47,000 acres in the summer months. Visitors to Mt. Desert Island, in particular, travel back and forth from Acadia to the various communities throughout their stay.

We ask that you reconsider the suspension of meetings of the Acadia National Park Advisory Commission while the Department completes its review. The regular communication between the communities and Acadia facilitated by the Commission is vitally important to the continued success of Acadia National Park.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,


Susan M. Collins
United States Senator


Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator