



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Washington, DC 20240

The Honorable Joe Manchin III
Chairman, Committee on Energy
and Natural Resources
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I hereby transmit the enclosed *Prison Ship Martyrs' Monument Special Resource Study*. The study was conducted pursuant to Public Law 113-291, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2015, which authorized the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of the Prison Ship Martyrs' Monument (Monument) located in Fort Green Park, Brooklyn, New York. The study was conducted by the National Park Service (NPS).

Section 100507 of Title 54, United States Code, establishes the criteria to be considered in the study of an area for potential inclusion in the national park system. To be recommended as a new unit, a study area must possess nationally significant natural or cultural resources and represent one of the most important examples of a particular resource type in the country; be suitable and feasible for addition to the system; and appropriate for direct NPS management.

On June 30, 1902, Congress passed an act (32 Stat. 747) that provided \$100,000 towards designing and constructing a large commemorative structure in Fort Greene Park to memorialize the Revolutionary War prison ship martyrs. Dedicated on November 15, 1908, the Prison Ship Martyrs' Monument serves as a memorial to the more than 11,500 men and women who perished while being held captive aboard British prison ships in Wallabout Bay from 1776 to 1783.

The study focused on the Prison Ship Martyrs' Monument and associated landscape including the upper and lower plazas and connecting staircase, including the crypt. The NPS evaluated national significance of the study area using national historic landmark (NHL) criteria and found that the Monument, while indirectly associated with a nationally significant historic event, is strictly a commemorative property that does not bear direct witness to the historic event in which it commemorates since it did not exist during the time of the historic event and it memorializes a phase of history not associated with the site. The NHL criteria also require that sites have not only historical or cultural significance, but also a high degree of integrity of location, design, and setting. Cemeteries and other properties that are commemorative of events unrelated to their sites do not ordinarily qualify for designation. In addition, the study concluded that Monument does not possess extraordinary national significance on its own design merit, tradition, or symbolic value when compared to other sites. The NPS study found that the Prison Ship

Martyrs' Monument would not qualify as an NHL, and therefore, does not meet the criterion of national significance.

As a result of the negative national significance finding, the criteria for suitability, feasibility, and need for direct NPS management were not considered in detail. In conclusion, the study area was found not to meet the congressionally mandated criteria for new units of the national park system, thus the NPS is not able to recommend that Congress consider establishing the Prison Ship Martyrs' Monument as a unit of the national park system.

The deaths of the prison ship martyrs is a tragic event worthy of remembrance and commemoration. The NPS found that its current steward, the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, maintains the Monument in good condition and available for public education and enjoyment. No management alternatives were prepared, and no federal action is proposed.

Thank you for your interest in the National Park Service. A similar letter is being sent to the Honorable John Barrasso, Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, United States Senate; the Honorable Raúl Grijalva, Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources, U.S. House of Representatives; and the Honorable Bruce Westerman, Ranking Member, Committee on Natural Resources, U.S. House of Representatives. The affected members of the New York delegation will also receive a copy of the study report and this letter.

Sincerely,

Shannon A. Estenoz
Assistant Secretary
for Fish and Wildlife and Parks

Enclosure

cc: The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
The Honorable Chuck Schumer
The Honorable Kirsten Gillibrand



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Ranking Member
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The Honorable Raúl Grijalva
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

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

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