



# 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 *James K. Polk Presidential Home Special Resource Study*. The study was conducted pursuant to Public Law 116-9, the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act, which authorized the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of the James K. Polk Home (Polk Home) and adjacent property, located in Columbia, Tennessee, to evaluate their potential for inclusion within the national park system. 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.

The Polk Home and adjacent property, which includes the Sisters' House, a kitchen outbuilding, gardens and garden cottage, the Polk Presidential Hall, and a modern law office building, are all situated on the land parcel once owned by Samuel Polk, James K. Polk's father. James K. Polk lived in his parents' Federal-style residence from 1818-1824 after graduating from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and before serving in the state legislature, the U.S. House of Representatives, as Governor of Tennessee, and as the eleventh President of the United States. Although he only lived in the home for a short time, this is the only extant residence associated with the 11th President, besides the White House, and it marks the beginning of his political career. The Polk Home remained in the family until 1862, changed owners several times and then was purchased by the State of Tennessee in 1929.

Today the Polk Home and adjacent property include 2.5 acres of a city block. The Polk Home, Sisters' House, kitchen outbuilding, gardens, and the Polk Presidential Hall are owned and operated by the James K. Polk Memorial Association of Nashville and the State of Tennessee as a museum.

Designated a National Historic Landmark (NHL) in 1961 for its association with the 11th President of the United States, the NPS confirmed the national significance of the Polk Home during the special resource study process. It was further determined that while the adjacent properties do not contribute to the national significance of the Polk Home as documented in the 1961 NHL nomination, the Sisters' House and the kitchen building do add to the historic setting of the Polk Home.

In evaluating suitability, the NPS determined that the addition of the Polk Home and adjacent property would constitute a substantive addition to the national park system, as there currently is no direct representation of Polk's story or legacy in the system.


In evaluating feasibility, the NPS found that the Polk Home meets all of the factors for consideration of feasibility as a unit of the national park system. Costs associated with acquisition, facility rehabilitation, and operations of the Polk Home represent a reasonable investment considering the current management model, state of the resources, and opportunities for visitor enjoyment.

In evaluating the fourth criterion, need for NPS management, the NPS found that the James K. Polk Memorial Association, in partnership with the State of Tennessee, is currently providing adequate resource protection and visitor access to the site to support public enjoyment. The home is open to the public for guided tours of the Polk residence, the kitchen building, and self-guided tours of the Sisters' House, which includes a museum room, gift shop, and garden. The Polk Presidential Hall accommodates rotating exhibits for the enjoyment of the approximate 10,000-13,000 annual visitors. Given the ongoing and successful work of the Association, NPS management would not be considered a "clearly superior alternative" and therefore does not meet the fourth criterion.

The NPS recognizes the existing public support and the potential opportunity for enhancing the interpretation and preservation of the James K. Polk Presidential Home. Given that the Association has expressed interest in partnering with the NPS, and that national significance and suitability criteria have been met, the Polk Home and adjacent property could be further recognized and assisted by the NPS through designation as an affiliated area of the NPS.

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 Bruce Westerman, Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources, U.S. House of Representatives; and the Honorable Raúl Grijalva, Ranking Member, Committee on Natural Resources, U.S. House of Representatives. The affected members of the Tennessee delegation will also receive a copy of the study report and this letter.

Sincerely,

 Date: 2023.02.01  
14:40:34 -05'00'

Shannon Estenoz  
Assistant Secretary  
for Fish and Wildlife and Parks

Enclosure

cc: The Honorable Marsha Blackburn  
The Honorable Bill Hagerty  
The Honorable Mark Green



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The Honorable John Barrasso  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
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Dear Senator Barrasso:

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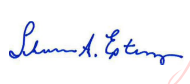
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Shannon Estenoz  
Assistant Secretary  
for Fish and Wildlife and Parks

Enclosure

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The Honorable Bill Hagerty  
The Honorable Mark Green



# United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
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The Honorable Bruce Westerman  
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

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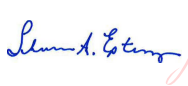
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Shannon Estenoz  
Assistant Secretary  
for Fish and Wildlife and Parks

Enclosure

cc: The Honorable Marsha Blackburn  
The Honorable Bill Hagerty  
The Honorable Mark Green





# United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
Washington, DC 20240

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

Dear Representative Grijalva:

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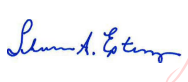
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