

**STATEMENT OF DANIEL N. WENK, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, SENATE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE, CONCERNING S. 1476, A BILL TO AUTHORIZE THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR TO CONDUCT A SPECIAL RESOURCES STUDY OF THE TULE LAKE SEGREGATION CENTER IN MODOC, COUNTY CALIFORNIA, TO DETERMINE THE SUITABILITY AND FEASIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING A UNIT OF THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM**

**SEPTEMBER 27, 2007**

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Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to appear before your committee to present the views of the Department of the Interior on S. 1476, a bill to conduct a special resources study of the Tule Lake Segregation Center in Modoc County, California, to determine the suitability and feasibility of establishing a unit of the National Park System.

The Department supports this legislation with amendments described later in this statement. The study authorized by S. 1476 would provide the opportunity to evaluate options for preserving and interpreting the largest and most heavily guarded of the ten internment camps where Japanese American citizens from west coast states were forced to live during World War II under Executive Order 9066. However, the Department feels that priority should be given to the 37 previously authorized studies for potential units of the National Park System, potential new National Heritage Areas, and potential additions to the National Trails System and National Wild and Scenic River System that have not yet been transmitted to the Congress.

Tule Lake, which housed more than 18,000 internees at its peak, was the only internment camp that was converted to a maximum-security segregation center for evacuees from all the relocation centers who resisted internment. It was the only camp that had its own jail. It had the most guard towers and the largest number of military police of any of the camps. During its

operation, the center was the site of several acts of resistance and declarations of martial law and military control.

The Tule Lake site features more surviving historic features and resources in original locations than all of the other former internment camps combined. The original jail structure is, for the former internees, the most significant symbol of internment anywhere in the United States. In 2006, the Secretary of the Interior designated 42 acres of the Tule Lake Segregation Center as a National Historic Landmark. The designation confirmed the national significance of the site, one of the key criteria a resource must meet to be considered an appropriate candidate for establishment as a unit of the National Park System. The work done on the nomination for National Historic Landmark designation would provide a foundation for the study that would be authorized by S. 1476.

The National Park Service administers two sites that were used as internment camps for Japanese Americans during World War II: Manzanar National Historic Site, in central California, which was authorized by Congress in 1992, and Minidoka Internment National Monument, in southern Idaho, which was established by presidential proclamation in 2001. However, neither site has the unique historic resources or story that Tule Lake has as the only designated segregation center among the ten internment camps.

The study would evaluate the site according to criteria provided by law to determine whether it is appropriate for addition to the National Park System, or whether it is better suited to protection by another entity. In carrying out the study, the National Park Service would work closely with

the Bureau of Reclamation, the Bureau of Land Management, and the California Department of Transportation, which are the primary land managers, as well as private land owners in the area, local agencies, and groups interested in the preservation of Japanese American internment sites, including the Tule Lake Committee. The study would cost an estimated \$150,000 to \$200,000.

S. 1476 provides for the study to be completed within one year after funds are made available for it. We recommend that the bill be amended to provide for the study to be completed within three years after funds are made available, which is the standard time frame for conducting special resource studies. We would also like to work with the committee to simplify the language of S. 1476 in several places.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my testimony. I would be pleased to answer any questions that you or other members of the committee might have.