September 12, 2017

The Honorable Ryan Zinke
Secretary
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Mr. Secretary,

The discontinuation of National Park Service Policy Memorandum 11-03 (the “Water Bottle Memo”) was ill-advised and shortsighted. The August 16th press release announcing the revocation of the Water Bottle Memo was devoid of a public process and lacked data-driven support materials. We strongly urge the Department of the Interior and the National Park Service to reverse the heavy-handed, Washington, D.C.-centric approach and empower park superintendents to make decisions that meet the needs of individual park units.

The Water Bottle Memo did not ban the use of plastic water bottles at all 417 National Parks. The Water Bottle Memo instituted a process for park superintendents to develop park-specific plans to fulfill budget, recycling, and hydration needs of individual park units and their visitors. The result was a decentralization of power away from Washington, D.C. and into the hands of park superintendents that are responsible for day-to-day operations of the parks. By all public accounts, the policies within the Water Bottle Memo were working.

National Park units that instituted the plastic water bottle ban did so successfully. At Zion National Park, the Water Bottle Memo resulted in the reduction of 5,000 pounds of plastic water bottle waste\(^1\). Subsequently, market forces adapted; Zions saw a 78% increase in the sale of reusable bottles\(^2\), new education displays were erected around water refilling stations, and the Park surpassed Yellowstone National Park in visitor attendance\(^3\).

At Zions and the other parks that instituted the plastic water bottle ban, the parks completed a 14-point process that would ensure visitor safety, alternative hydration options, and public participation and


\(^2\) Id.

accountability\textsuperscript{4}. In total, 23 parks engaged in the process and satisfied the requirements of the Water Bottle Memo to ban the use of plastic water bottles\textsuperscript{5}.

Park participation is further evidence that the policy was working. Just 6\% (23/417 National Parks) of the parks had the resources and economies of scale to institute the plastic water bottle ban and the vast majority did not. In each instance, the power of the policy was that local superintendents were empowered to act and Washington, D.C. was largely kept out of the decision.

Again, we strongly urge the Department of the Interior and the National Park Service to reinstitute the Water Bottle Memo – or develop a new process that empowers local parks to manage local needs. The National Park System has enjoyed record growth during recent years and a continued focus on sustainability, visitor experience, and budgets are needed and healthy. That said, reversing the Water Bottle Memo was unnecessary and presented a false choice that we hope the American people will reject.

Sincerely,

Jessica Klodnicki
CamelBak

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\textsuperscript{4}United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service Policy Memorandum 11-03 (December 24, 2011), retrieved August 30, 2017 from: \url{https://www.nps.gov/policy/plastic.pdf}

\textsuperscript{5}National Park Service Ends Effort to Eliminate Sale of Disposable Water Bottles (August 16, 2017), retrieved August 30, 2017 from: \url{https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1207/08-16-2017-water-bottles.htm}}