



May 8, 2018

The Honorable Cory Gardner  
United States Senate  
354 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

**RE: S. 2509 – National Park Restoration Act**

Dear Senator Gardner,

Thank you for taking the time recently to visit with my Commerce City Council colleagues and me. We greatly appreciate the opportunity to share our key issues and hear about the important items you are working on for Colorado and our community.

We were pleased to hear you are a co-sponsor of the National Park Restoration Act (S. 2509). It is heartening that the \$11 billion national parks maintenance backlog will be addressed by the \$18 billion designated in this legislation if passed by Congress and signed by the President. While Commerce City supports this legislation, we want to strongly voice our support for an amendment that would fund the national refuges maintenance backlog. We enthusiastically concur with your recognition that funding refuge maintenance would benefit the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge – the nation’s largest urban refuge – in our city.

It is our understanding the maintenance backlog for national refuges is one-tenth of the national parks maintenance backlog. Dedicated funding for refuge maintenance would address critical projects like the rehabilitation of Lake Mary (estimated cost \$500,000) for therapeutic recreation, urban school groups, and disadvantaged youth to take advantage of a safe and accessible catch-and-release fishing experience. It seems there is room in this legislation to accommodate important refuge projects such as this and we respectfully want you and your colleagues to consider adding national refuge maintenance to the bill.

Additionally, the President’s hiring freeze has left the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge operations understaffed for over a year. While the FY 2018 omnibus appropriations legislation may alleviate this issue, Commerce City may request further support if staffing does not materialize.

Thank you for considering our perspective. Please let us know how we can be helpful as you continue your formidable efforts in serving our wonderful state.

Sincerely,

Mayor Sean Ford