

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

July 30, 2026

The Honorable Doug Burgum
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

The Honorable Jessica Bowron
Acting Director
National Park Service
1849 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Burgum and Acting Director Bowron:

We write with strong objections to your rushed “redevelopment” of East Potomac Park, as well as the lack of clear public communication as to the changes planned for a beloved historic and recreation site. Any significant construction at East Potomac Park, which was expressly created by Congress in 1897 to be “forever held and used as a park for the recreation and pleasure of the people,”¹ requires compliance with bedrock environmental and historic preservation laws, robust public consultation and review, and protection of the existing uses of the site. Removing or diminishing any of those uses, including the existing affordable public golf course, the biking and running trails around the course, and the historic grove of cherry trees along Hains Point, is unacceptable and potentially illegal. We urge you to immediately abandon those efforts and protect this essential site for generations present and future.

East Potomac Golf Links has been an indispensable public asset since 1921. The National Park Service (NPS) responded to popular demand that year to create one of the country’s first public golf courses. The three courses—Red, White and Blue—were designed or inspired by the designs of Walter Travis, who rejected Victorian-style designs favored by the rich and powerful to create links-style courses that all players could enjoy. The courses opened with rounds of golf priced at just 25 cents. This legacy of inclusive pricing continues to this day. Visitors can book a child’s tee time for just \$9 and enjoy a hamburger at the Potomac Grille for under \$10—an enjoyable afternoon that won’t break the bank. The courses became a core part of our national civil rights history in 1941 when three Black golf players insisted on playing a round of golf, making East Potomac Golf Links one of the first desegregated golf courses in the country. For 85 years, residents of all backgrounds in the District of Columbia and the surrounding area have enjoyed the golf course and the biking and running trails that surround it.

This all changed on August 1, 2025, when you met with President Trump to discuss destroying the Red, White, and Blue courses and replacing them with a single “championship-

¹ Act of Mar. 3, 1897, ch. 375, 29 Stat. 624.

style” layout designed to host professional tournaments. This recently released “Washington National Plan,” credited to Tom Fazio—who has previously designed golf courses for President Trump—would be a wholesale redevelopment of a property that has been on the National Register of Historic Places since 1973. To make this design a reality, the existing 36 holes, split across the Red, White and Blue courses, would need to be destroyed, trees would be cut down, and an entirely new clubhouse would likely be constructed. All of this would yield just one large course, an 18-hole course designed for professionals, and one 9-hole pitch and putt course, leaving little room for the cycling, running and picnicking activities that are equally important to the park’s character.

On June 28, this already expansive redesign became catastrophic when President Trump toured East Potomac Golf Links and examined new renderings of a far more expansive redesign proposal than what you disclosed on social media. If the high-resolution photos of the plan clutched by the President during the tour reflect the Administration’s real intentions, the redesign would create just one 18-hole course for professionals, provide no 9-hole pitch and putt course, and completely eliminate Hains Point and the walking and biking trails surrounding the park.² The Administration has not publicly released cost projections for this massive undertaking.³ The limited information shared about public access after the redesign includes estimates that the weekend price for local golfers could nearly *double* as a result of this complete transformation, even as the number of available courses to play on is cut by a third.⁴ This undermines the longstanding principles of affordability and public access which have driven East Potomac Golf Links since its founding.

While the courses are certainly in need of significant maintenance and repair following decades of underinvestment, this work must be accomplished in compliance with the law and with respect for the historic nature of this beloved public resource. NPS itself has performed a Cultural Landscape Report on East Potomac Golf Links, determining in 2019 that the Red, White and Blue courses are “essential” to the “design integrity at East Potomac” and that the historic design reflects “an egalitarian institution within the city of Washington, D.C., as originally intended.”⁵ Furthermore, the biking and running trails circumnavigating East Potomac Park—in addition to providing crucial public access to the waterfront—are core components of the park.

² Rick Maese, Photos from Trump’s golf course tour reveal extensive overhaul of East Potomac, Wash. Post (June 30, 2026), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/sports/2026/06/30/photos-trumps-golf-course-tour-reveal-overhaul-east-potomac/>.

³ Garrett Morrison, *Reacting to Tom Fazio’s Plan for East Potomac Golf Links*, FRIED EGG GOLF (May 14, 2026), <https://www.thefriedegg.com/articles/washington-dc-golf-east-potomac-tom-fazio-plans>.

⁴ Reese Gorman, *Trump Will Take Over a Central D.C. Golf Course Starting This Week*, NOTUS (May 1, 2026), <https://www.notus.org/trump-white-house/east-potomac-golf-course-takeover>.

⁵ National Park Service, NCRO 800 151975: *Cultural Landscape Report: National Park Service Golf Courses in the District of Columbia: East Potomac Park, Langston, and Rock Creek: Treatment Guidelines*, (June 2019), <https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/Reference/Profile/2264719>.

Hains Point is a beloved and scenic picnic area that is also critical to residents and visitors alike, who come each spring to enjoy Washington, D.C.'s cherry blossom season.

To raise funds for the Washington National Plan, a private entity called the National Garden of American Heroes Foundation has sent brochures of the redesign to prospective donors and advertised the option for these donors to remain anonymous. The only information available about this shadowy foundation is that interested donors can contact President Trump's 2024 presidential campaign finance director if they have any questions.⁶ We have seen this hollow promise before. Previous construction efforts that President Trump has touted as privately funded have both ballooned in cost and in fact been paid for by taxpayers.⁷

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) requires federal agencies to assess the effects of any proposed project on "historic federal properties."⁸ It also requires federal agencies to publicly release development plans of this level of significance and incorporate sufficient time for public comment. Instead of engaging with the public about this design as required by law, the Administration began setting plans in motion to close the existing golf courses and clear stands of trees within them in May 2026. The trees have only been spared and the course only remains open due to pending litigation.

To learn more about your plans to redevelop the park, and how you will address our concerns about the redevelopment and its negative impact on multi-purpose recreation access, we request written answers to the following questions by no later than August 14, 2026:

1. What is the cost of redeveloping East Potomac Golf Links?
2. Will the beloved and heavily-used walking and biking paths and lanes through the Park be preserved? If so, will any changes be made to those paths and lanes?
3. Will the similarly beloved and heavily-visited cherry trees within the Park be preserved? If so, are there anticipated impacts on health or access to those trees?
4. How much more will it cost for the public to play golf at East Potomac Golf Links under the "Washington National Plan"? The similar courses that you have cited as cost models in your redesign proposal feature prices that are as much as double the current East Potomac Golf Links prices. What justifies this increase?

⁶ Rick Maese & Dan Diamond, *Trump Fundraiser Shares Plans for 'Garden of Heroes,' Golf Course as Takeover Looms*, WASH. POST (May 2, 2026), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/sports/2026/05/02/trump-garden-golf-east-potomac-plans/>.

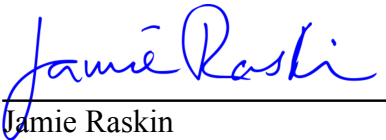
⁷ Sarah Blaskey and Jonathan O'Connell, *Trump Said No Taxpayer Money Would Be Spent on the Ballroom. A Contractor's Invoices Show Otherwise*, WASH. POST (Jun. 16, 2026), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/2026/06/16/records-reveal-600m-estimate-trumps-ballroom-project-with-half-taxpayers/>.

⁸ 54 U.S.C. §306108 and 36 C.F.R. §800.2(d)(2)

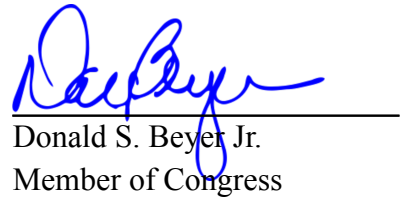
5. What is the relationship between the National Garden of American Heroes Foundation and members of the Trump Administration and specifically President Trump?
6. What are the Department's plans to assess project compliance under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act for the wholesale redevelopment of East Potomac Golf Links?
 - a. If these plans move forward, what is the Department's anticipated public comment schedule?

We appreciate your consideration and look forward to your prompt response.

Very truly yours,



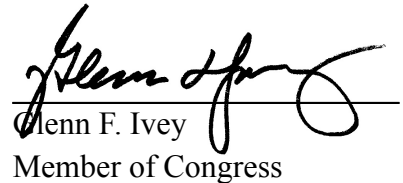
Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress



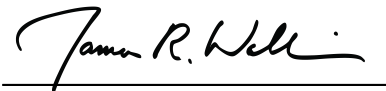
Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



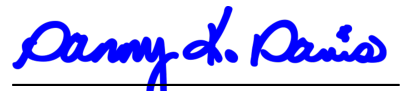
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Glenn F. Ivey
Member of Congress



James R. Walkinshaw
Member of Congress



Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



Sarah Elfreth
Member of Congress



Dave Min
Member of Congress



Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



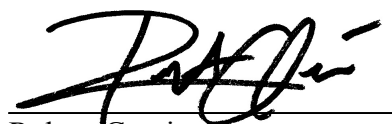
Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



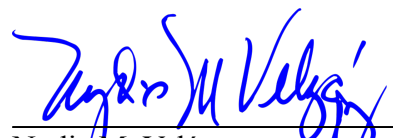
Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress



Robert Garcia
Member of Congress



Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



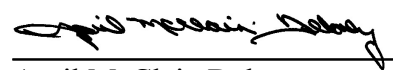
Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress



Kweisi Mfume
Member of Congress



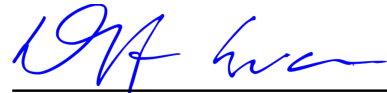
Shri Thanedar
Member of Congress



April McClain Delaney
Member of Congress



Jasmine Crockett
Member of Congress



Dwight Evans
Member of Congress



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



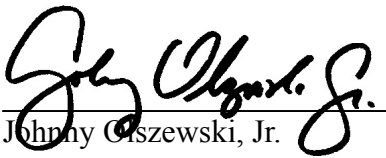
Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress



Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress



Johnny Olszewski, Jr.
Member of Congress



John Garamendi
Member of Congress



André Carson
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



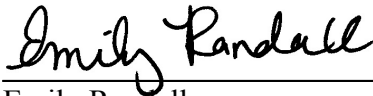
Adelita S. Grijalva
Member of Congress



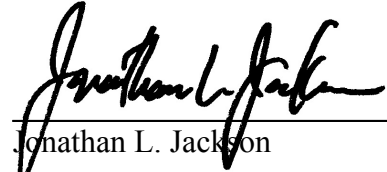
Joyce Beatty
Member of Congress



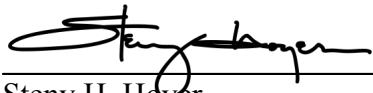
Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress



Emily Randall
Member of Congress



Jonathan L. Jackson
Member of Congress



Steny H. Hoyer
Member of Congress



Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



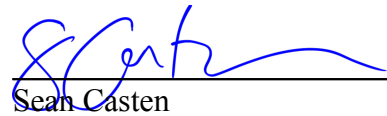
Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress



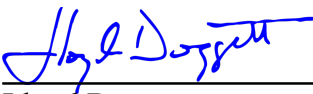
Yassamin Ansari
Member of Congress



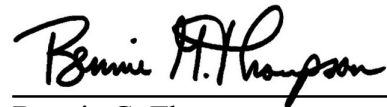
MARK TAKANO
Member of Congress



Sean Casten
Member of Congress



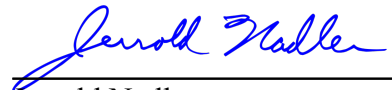
Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress



Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress



Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress



Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress