

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074  
MINORITY (202) 225-5051

<http://oversight.house.gov>

**Opening Statement**  
**Ranking Member Brenda Lawrence (MI-5)**  
**Subcommittee on the Interior**  
**on**  
***Modernizing the National Park Service Concession Contract Program***  
**July 23, 2015**

Madam Chairwoman, thank you for holding this important hearing. I appreciate the National Park Service' protection and care of our nation's cherished natural and cultural resources and for the important educational and recreational opportunities they provide for all Americans.

As the Park Service prepares for its Centennial celebration in 2016, we must ensure that the very best services are provided for the 280 million visitors that our National Parks attract each year.

Vendors play a key role in providing visitor services. They offer a wide range of recreational and retail services while helping to generate more than \$1.2 billion annually in revenue for the federal government.

Vendors also employ more than 25,000 workers and drive economic growth in the communities surrounding the Parks.

I understand that the public is demanding more recreational and cultural opportunities during their visits to National Parks. I also understand that vendors are ready, willing and able to provide these additional visitor services but they have encountered some barriers.

Today, we will examine some of the challenges faced by the National Park Service and vendors in providing the best visitor experiences to our parks. Those challenges include: a rigid contracting process; contracts which create negative cash flow for vendors ; and the Park Service's failure to meet public demand for more services.

Although the Park Service has made great improvements in its contracting process in recent years, more work can and should be done. We can always work to improve the contracting process with greater cooperation between government and industry.

I look forward to hearing from the witnesses as we explore possible solutions that can drive progress in this issue and help create a memorable Centennial celebration that all Americans take pride in and enjoy.

I yield back the balance of my time.

---

Contact: Jennifer Hoffman, Communications Director, (202) 226-5181.