



April 16, 2018

Honorable Tom McClintock
Natural Resources Committee
Subcommittee on Federal Lands
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Colleen Hanabusa
Natural Resources Committee
Subcommittee on Federal Lands
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

As National President of the National Treasury Employees Union (NTEU), I represent over 150,000 federal employees in 32 agencies across the government. One of those agencies is the National Park Service (NPS). NPS employs many seasonal workers, such as Rangers, without whom our parks would not be able to operate. As the Park Service gears up for the summer, we are alarmed to be hearing from these employees who are confused, frustrated, and hurt by the Service's new approach to their 1040-hour appointments. Some are being told that they can sign up for a six-month contract and they will be terminated after that; while others are being told that they went over the 1,039-hour cap in the past, and are now permanently banned from working in the parks. Many employees in the latter category have worked for the Service every year for decades and were actively encouraged by their supervisors to work two 1040-hour appointments in a year to gain more experience. Some last worked more than 1039 hours 16 years ago. Each region, and each park, seems to have its own rules. Apparently, there is no uniform policy in place so many inconsistent approaches have arisen.

In parts of the Pacific West Region, for example, they are banning employees from future employment if they worked more than the 1039 hours in 2014 or later. However, the Intermountain Region has no time limit on retroactivity. Seasonal employees in Sequoia-Kings Canyon, on the other hand, have been told that as long as they reapplied every year they should be fine. Just north in Yosemite, however, some seasonal workers have been told they have lost their rehire status for life because they went over the 1039-hour limit.

As noted, these seasonal employees had been rehired year after year, many for decades, without having to formally apply and compete for positions. Although they could have, in theory, done so this year, they were not notified of this new "policy" until after vacancy announcements had closed.

Banning these long term, dedicated employees means a loss of skilled, talented workers. For example, Harper's Ferry is in danger of losing personnel with expertise in gun powder to work their cannons because new rules seem to indicate that they will be terminated.

It is not at all clear from the regulations that any retroactive application is necessary. At a minimum, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management can be contacted to approve extensions of

NPS' rehire authority in these situations. As you can imagine, this is a crisis situation. It's already the middle of April, and summer is rapidly approaching, and long-time, experienced employees have had their lives upended with no answers. We are seeking your assistance in obtaining a clear and consistent path from NPS for temporary seasonal employees. Please help us to persuade NPS to create one set policy with clear communication for long-serving employees so that Park visitors can have an excellent experience in the parks this summer and beyond.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anthony M. Reardon". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Anthony M. Reardon
National President

cc: Honorable Mark Meadows, Chair
Honorable Gerald E. Connolly, Ranking Member