

Written Statement of
The Honorable Representative Brett Guthrie
Kentucky's Second District

Before the U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Federal Lands
Submission for the Record

March 18, 2026

Chairman Tiffany, Ranking Member Neguse, and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for allowing my bill, H.R. 3286, the *Mammoth Cave National Park Boundary Adjustment Act*, to be included in today's hearing. I appreciate the subcommittee's willingness to hear about the importance of Mammoth Cave, not only to my district, but to the surrounding counties and the entire Commonwealth of Kentucky.

Every year, Mammoth Cave National Park draws hundreds of thousands of visitors and contributes over \$90 million to our local economy. In fact, in 2024, the park received nearly 750,000 visitors, generating \$97.3 million for the surrounding communities. This proposed expansion of the park is expected to provide new experiences for visitors to the park and further drive economic growth in our local community. My bill was introduced with the support of local elected officials and organizations in the surrounding counties, including Edmonson County Judge Executive Scott Lindsey, who is testifying before your Subcommittee during this hearing.

This natural wonder has inspired generations of people for thousands of years, playing a foundational role in the culture of our region. I am proud to lead this legislation that will expand protections for the cave system's important biodiversity and rich history, ensuring that it can be studied, maintained, and enjoyed by future generations of Americans.

My bill would authorize the National Park Service to acquire 551.14 acres of land currently owned by The Nature Conservancy (TNC). This expansion would allow the National Park to manage land in Edmonson and Barren Counties, including the Green River watershed, further conserving the area's wildlife and cultural heritage while generating additional tourism for Kentucky's Second District. The property also includes cave passages, including Coach and James Caves, which contain prehistoric and historic artifacts.

Established as a National Park in 1941, Mammoth Cave National Park is home to the world's longest known cave system, stretching a currently mapped 426 miles with many miles still undiscovered. In 1981, the park was named a World Heritage Site, and in 1990, a Biosphere Reserve. I was also pleased to welcome Secretary of the Interior Doug Burgum to Mammoth Cave National Park last April for a tour of the park and a discussion with National Park Service staff about the park's historic and cultural importance.

This passage of the *Mammoth Cave National Park Boundary Adjustment Act* would protect one of our nation's most significant national treasures. This legislation supports the continued responsible stewardship of Mammoth Cave National Park while preserving Americans' access to the outdoors and strengthening the park's long-standing contributions to local communities and the regional economy.

Thank you again, Chairman Tiffany, Ranking Member Neguse, and members of the Subcommittee, for holding this hearing and for the opportunity to allow my colleague and good friend, County Judge Executive Scott Lindsey, to speak on behalf of the *Mammoth Cave National Park Boundary Adjustment Act*, and the importance of its passage.