

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 19, 2023

Charles F. Sams III  
Director  
National Park Service  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Director Sams:

I write to you today in response to the National Park Service's (NPS) request for public comment on the Lake Mead National Recreation Sustainable Low Water Access Plan (SLWAP) and to express my concerns with the continued closures of the majority of boat launch ramps at Lake Mead. In August 2022, I sent you a letter requesting information about the actions that NPS is taking to re-open boat launch ramps at Lake Mead National Recreation Area, given the harm these closures have done to local small business owners and visitors. I want to thank you for responding to my letter, explaining the resources you need to increase recreational access at the lake, and keeping me apprised of your next steps. In that same vein, I appreciate your consideration and forethought in working to find a solution to the challenges facing Lake Mead as a result of dropping water levels from extreme drought and extending the public comment period so that my constituents can be heard.

Closures at Lake Mead have been detrimental to the small businesses and local economies in the surrounding cities and towns that depend on tourism and visitation. Lake Mead National Recreation Area is the fifth most-visited park in the National Park System, with about 7.6 million visitors. I have heard from nearly 600 of my constituents sharing their concerns with the proposed plan and environmental assessment, which will inform crucial decisions about the future of Lake Mead. NPS' final assessment and decision, which is expected this spring or summer, will determine the future of outdoor recreation at Lake Mead, including the fate of motorized boating access and concessions operations.

The SLWAP, as released in November 2022, outlines three preliminary management concepts that are being explored by NPS at Lake Mead National Recreation Area. While I understand the need to consider a variety of options, Concept 3 - which would essentially discontinue concession services, remove facilities and infrastructure, and give no consideration to future extensions or relocations of boat launch ramps and marinas - is not a viable option. Concept 3 is not a solution, but rather will greatly reduce recreation and visitation and shut the doors of small businesses in southern Nevada, depleting critical revenue streams for local economies.

Understanding that this is the driest the western region has been in nearly 1,200 years, we must find creative and sustainable solutions to protect our lands and waters, without removing access completely. I stand ready to assist NPS in maintaining and improving recreation access at Lake Mead, while overcoming the barriers we face with the rapid decline in water levels. During the 117th Congress, I helped secure additional funding that could be used by NPS through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Inflation Reduction Act, and the final bipartisan government

funding package to address this unprecedented drought and support new water infrastructure. I look forward to finding ways to secure the necessary funding you may need to find a viable path forward for the Lake Mead National Recreation Area.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jacky Rosen", written over a horizontal line.

Jacky Rosen  
United States Senator