



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

ROGER BERLINER
COUNCILMEMBER
DISTRICT 1

December 4, 2008

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

Dear Secretary Kempthorne:

As I know you appreciate, the C&O National Historic Park is a national treasure and one of the most popular destinations in the national park system. In the area I am privileged to represent, almost 700,000 people visit, making it one of the busiest areas of the C&O Canal.

Regretfully, on September 6, 2008 heavy rains from Tropical Storm Hanna caused a 125-foot breach in the canal's towpath that continues to expand. Notwithstanding the good work of your people in the National Park Service to construct a bypass, the aesthetic quality of the park has been severely compromised. Moreover, the low water levels left in the canal pose a potential health risk: once summer arrives, the stagnant, dirty water collecting in the drained canal bed could create a breeding ground for disease-carrying mosquitoes.

Clearly, this situation must be addressed immediately. The most recent estimates my office has obtained suggest that it will cost approximately \$2.9 million to repair this breach. Citizens who love the park have stepped up to assist. Yet, this isn't a responsibility that is properly borne by citizens.

On behalf of the residents of Montgomery County, I respectfully request that the Department of the Interior fund the entire cost of repairs during this fiscal year in order to quickly restore the C&O Canal National Historic Park to its former condition and permit visitors to fully experience its beauty and historical significance.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Roger Berliner".

Roger Berliner
Councilmember, District 1