

[INSERT YOUR LETTERHEAD IF AN ORGANIZATION, DELETE IF YOU ARE WRITING AS AN INDIVIDUAL]

[Member Name]

[Address]

Washington, DC 20515

March **xx**, 2025

Dear **[Representative/Senator Name]**,

I write to respectfully request \$500,000 in appropriations for the Kenai Mountains-Turnagain Arm National Heritage Area (KMTA NHA) in both FY 2025 and FY 2026. As Alaska's only congressionally designated National Heritage Area, KMTA plays a vital role in preserving the historic contributions of our state while driving economic growth, strengthening local businesses, and providing opportunities for Alaskans. In FY24 alone, KMTA:

- **Supported 115 jobs** through projects, programs, and partnerships.
- **Served 1,100 youth** through education programs that equip homegrown Alaskans with skills and exposure to local industries, encouraging them to stay in the state and pursue Alaska-based careers.
- **Generated \$1.2 million in matching contributions**, leveraging federal investment to attract additional funding from private sources, significantly multiplying economic benefits.
- **Delivered a return of \$2-\$3 in the local economy** for every \$1 of federal funding invested in Alaskan communities through donor support, cash investments, and in-kind contributions.
- **Boosted Alaskan-owned businesses** in outdoor recreation, including outfitters and guides, the hospitality industry, restaurants, tour operators, and local transportation services.
- **Helped drive tourism**, with Southcentral Alaska—the region where KMTA operates—accounting for **\$1.6 billion (41%) of direct tourism spending in Alaska** in 2022-2023. Southcentral was the **second-most-visited region**, with 50% of travelers exploring attractions within our NHA.

These numbers illustrate the powerful impact of KMTA on our economy and workforce. However, without continued federal investment, these benefits—and the long-term sustainability of Alaska's only National Heritage Area—are at risk.

[Insert paragraph on how you have benefited from KMTA and what program/initiative would go unfunded without federal support (*note: any program you've benefitted from would be impacted), including qualitative and quantitative impacts.]

The success of KMTA reflects the broader impact of the National Heritage Area program across the country. In FY 2023, NHAs collectively leveraged nearly **\$50 million in non-federal contributions**, doubling their federal funding, and partnered with over **7,000 organizations** to

engage **2.4 million visitors**. A recent study found that NHAs contribute nearly **\$13 billion in economic impact** to the communities they serve.

Despite growing demand and bipartisan support, federal funding for NHAs has remained stagnant for two decades. Adjusted for inflation, NHAs today receive **half** of what they did 20 years ago. As America approaches its **250th anniversary**, now is the time to invest in NHAs, which safeguard and share the diverse stories of our nation.

Alongside this request for direct funding to KMTA, we urge you to support **\$33.5 million in total funding for the National Heritage Area program** in FY 2025 and FY 2026. This modest investment ensures that NHAs across the country can continue their invaluable work. However, current appropriations levels fall millions short of this request, putting at risk the critical programming and partnerships that NHAs sustain.

During a time of increased scrutiny over federal spending, it is imperative to support programs that deliver strong returns for taxpayers. NHAs like KMTA exemplify a high-impact, cost-effective federal investment that strengthens communities, boosts local economies, and preserves America's heritage for future generations. I urge you to work with your colleagues to ensure that KMTA receives the **\$500,000 in appropriations** needed to continue its work, while also supporting **full funding for the broader National Heritage Area program**.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

[Name]

[Organization/Affiliation/Community]