JAY OBERNOLTE
TWENTY THIRD DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE
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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC

WASHINGTON, D.C. OFFICE:
2433 RAYBURN House OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
TELEPHONE: 2021 225-5861

DISTRICT OFFICE:
9700 SEVENTH AVE., SUITE 201
HESPERIA, CA 92345
TELEPHONE: (760) 247-1815

E-MAIL VIA WEBSITE:
http://obernolte.house.gov

September 30, 2025

The Honorable Doug Burgum
Secretary of the Interior
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Jessica Bowron
Acting Director
National Park Service
1849 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Burgum and Acting Director Bowron,

As you develop plans to address the possibility of a lapse in appropriations for the National Park Service, I would like to urge you to make provisions that ensure continued public access to our nation's National Parks. Access to our national parks during this period carry significant implications for local communities and the millions of Americans who visit them each year. I also want to specifically request that Joshua Tree National Park remain open to the public during any possible government shutdown, provided it can be done safely and responsibly.

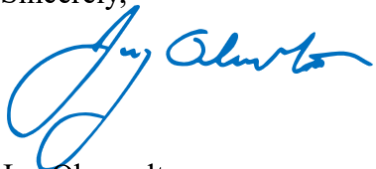
The Joshua Tree National Park is not only a national treasure but also the economic backbone for the communities that surround it. Each year, millions of visitors come to the Park, generating hundreds of millions of dollars in spending and supporting thousands of local jobs in towns like Twentynine Palms and Yucca Valley. For small businesses, hotels, and restaurants, even a short disruption in access to the Park has real consequences. Keeping the Park open will help protect those livelihoods at a time when many families can least afford uncertainty.

I recognize that operating during a shutdown is difficult, with reduced staffing and limited resources however, in previous shutdowns the Department has taken steps to keep national parks accessible in a limited capacity, balancing public access with resource protection. With careful management to ensure visitors' safety and protect Park resources, I believe Joshua Tree can and should remain open.

I look forward to working with you to make sure that Californians, and all Americans, can continue to enjoy Joshua Tree National Park, even during this challenging period.

I appreciate your attention to this request. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact my office at (202) 225-5861.

Sincerely,



Jay Obernolte
Member of Congress

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