

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

February 8, 2023

Deb Haaland
Secretary
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Haaland,

As you finalize the Department of the Interior's budget request for Fiscal Year 2024, I respectfully ask that you prioritize funding for the study of erosion impacting the Cumberland Island National Seashore. This study was authorized in the Explanatory Statement of Division G of the Consolidated Appropriations Act for 2023.

Cumberland Island National Seashore is one of the nation's greatest natural treasures. Its 17 miles are home to secluded white sandy beaches, untouched wilderness, wild horses and countless wildlife, and historic ruins from Georgia's rich history.

Today, the shores of this remarkable island are eroding at an increasingly alarming rate. Until the root causes are known, there cannot be appropriate actions to mitigate and prevent further damage to this unique habitat. A study of adaptive strategies for coastal resilience is a critical first step to getting this right, not just for Cumberland but for the entire coastal region.

The City of Saint Mary's, the docking station for Cumberland Island ferries, sits at sea level at many points along its coast, making the community vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change. Additionally, Cumberland Island's proximity to and the surrounding community support of Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay highlights the urgency of this work.

We must understand the forces at work and the strategies necessary to mitigate and counteract them. The work done for this project will serve as a model for other sites across the country. It will accelerate the National Park Services' and the United States Army Corps of Engineers' understanding of how to adapt and protect our coastal assets and communities for the coming generations.

Thank you for your consideration of this urgent request.

Sincerely,



Jon Ossoff
United States Senator



Earl L. "Buddy" Carter
Member of Congress

CC: Mr. Charles Sams, Director, National Parks Service