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## **Higher fees at national parks: You've now got another month to tell Trump what you think**

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The Trump administration has quietly given the public an extra month to comment on its proposal to make it dramatically more expensive to visit Joshua Tree, Grand Canyon, Yosemite, Zion and 14 other popular national parks.

Last month, Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke proposed raising the vehicle entry fees for those parks from either \$25 or \$30 to \$70 during busy season. Zinke originally set a comment deadline of Thanksgiving Day, November 23, giving the public just one month to weigh in. But as of Monday evening, the [public comment page on the National Park Service's website](#) had been updated to show a deadline of December 22 at 11:59 p.m.

Neither the Interior Department nor the National Park Service announced the deadline extension in a press release or on social media. Chris Clarke, California desert program manager for the nonprofit National Parks Conservation Association, speculated that public pressure had convinced federal officials to extend the comment period.

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The Trump administration hasn't scheduled any public meetings to gather feedback on its proposal. Last time the park service increased entrance fees at some parks, in 2015, there was a much longer comment process that included public meetings and resulted in less dramatic changes. Joshua Tree, for instance, raised its vehicle fee from \$15 to \$25.

"While two months is much better than one month, it's still not sufficient to have people really examine the issues," Clarke said. "It would be nice if there were studies examining what the economic impacts would be on communities."

Zinke says his goal is to start working through the National Park Service's \$11 billion maintenance backlog. But the Interior Department estimates that the fee increases would boost the park service's revenue by just \$70 million per year. And President Trump has proposed slashing the park service's budget by \$400 million next year.

Under Zinke's proposal, single-vehicle entrance fees during peak-visitation months would rise from either \$25 or \$30 to \$70 at these 17 national parks:

- Acadia (Maine)
- Arches (Utah)
- Bryce Canyon (Utah)
- Canyonlands (Utah)
- Denali (Alaska)
- Glacier (Montana)
- Grand Canyon (Arizona)
- Grand Teton (Wyoming)

- Joshua Tree (California)
- Mount Rainier (Washington)
- Olympic (Washington)
- Rocky Mountain (Colorado)
- Shenandoah (Virginia)
- Sequoia & Kings Canyon (California)
- Yellowstone (Idaho, Montana, Wyoming)
- Yosemite (California)
- Zion (Utah)

*You can comment on the National Park Service's proposed fee increases by going to <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/document.cfm?documentID=83652>.*

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