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Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition

Supporting Organized Voices and Empowered Communities Since 1987

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October 15, 2018

Attn: Brian Joyner
National Park Service
National Mall and Memorial Parks
900 Ohio Drive SW,
Washington, DC 20024

Re: 83 FR 40460 / Document No. 2018-17386

To: Brian Joyner:

This letter serves as notice that OVEC, the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition, opposes 83 FR 40460, the proposed rules regarding demonstrations and special events in the National Capital Region.

OVEC staff and members have occasionally helped organize and often participated in peacefully demonstrating in the National Capital Region over national policies, priorities, and actions.

This is our First Amendment right.

No hindrances (such as delays of more than 24 hours for protest permit applications), no fees should be associated with exercising our First Amendment right. Protest should not be available to only those who can afford to pay fees.

These proposed rules fail to justify why they might be needed. They lack clear guidance for any official who would attempt to implement them, leaving too much leeway for an individual official bias—or superior's bias—to squash dissent of a viewpoint with which they disagree.

In short, the proposed rules set forth 83 FR 40460 are appalling anti-American.

Some of the greatest social advances in our country have come as a result of the peaceful pressure created when people assemble and demonstrate as close as they can to the offices of those elected to represent us on the national level. Those supposedly elected to represent us should be able to see when we the people feel we are being misrepresented, and should be able to see when we are demanding change, even from the windows of the White House.

Sincerely,

Vivian Stockman,
OVEC Vice Director