

## **NPS' Proposed Changes to Road-based Commercial Tour Requirements and Fees**

On October 24, 2017, the U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service (NPS) announced an open comment period on a proposal to change commercial use authorization (CUA) requirements and fees. The proposed fee structure would increase fees at several National Parks, and is scheduled to go into effect on January 1, 2019.

On March 12, 2018 the Office of Advocacy (Advocacy) filed a comment letter urging NPS to consider the impacts to small businesses in preparing its final fee rates and to consider cost-saving alternatives for small business. The proposed fee increase will have a detrimental effect on small business. The letter to DOI may be accessed at:

<https://www.sba.gov/advocacy/3-12-18-re-proposed-changes-road-based-commercial-tour-requirements-and-fees>

- The proposal would require that road-based commercial tour operators obtain a CUA for each location in which they operate, as well as submit mandatory annual CUA reports after each season. The fees would be composed of three items: a CUA application fee, a CUA management fee, and an entrance fee.
- The CUA application fee would be an annual, non-refundable charge of \$300. NPS states it would adjust the fee periodically to account for increased costs of inflation. The proposed management fee would be \$5 per client. The entrance fees are based on a fee schedule proposed by NPS.
- Advocacy spoke with several small commercial tour operators who stated that the proposal would have a detrimental effect on their business. In some cases the fee increase would raise costs by nearly 800 percent.
- 95 percent of businesses in the scenic and sightseeing transportation industry are small business as defined by the Small Business Administration.
- Advocacy's comment letter urging NPS to reconsider its current proposal for fee increases, and implement cost-saving alternatives that would help small businesses.
- For more information visit Advocacy's web page at [www.sba.gov/advocacy](http://www.sba.gov/advocacy), or contact Prianka Sharma at (202) 205-6938.