

**Statement of
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**Before the
Subcommittee on Fisheries Conservation, Wildlife and Oceans
Committee on Resources
United States House of Representatives**

**Concerning
H.R. 3433 – the Transfer of the Mingo Job Corps Center**

May 13, 2004

MR. CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I would like to present the Department's views on H.R. 3433, the Mingo Job Corps Center. The Department supports H.R. 3433.

H.R. 3433 – the Transfer of the Mingo Job Corps Center

H.R. 3433 would transfer administrative jurisdiction of certain Federal lands in Missouri from the Secretary of the Interior to the Secretary of Agriculture for continued Federal operation of the Mingo Job Corps Civilian Conservation Center by the Forest Service. H.R. 3433 would not change the Secretary of Labor's role or authority regarding this Job Corps Center. Transfer of the Mingo Job Corps Center would ensure the legal

management of the job corps center, and ownership of the facilities, would reside solely with the Forest Service.

Civilian Conservation Centers (CCC) are operated on public land under an agreement between the Department of Labor (DOL) and another Federal agency which provides, in addition to other training and assistance, programs of work-based learning to conserve, develop, manage or enhance public national resources, public recreational areas, or to develop community projects in the public interest.

The Forest Service has the experience and expertise to manage the Mingo Job Corps Center because the agency currently oversees or administers 18 Job Corps Centers throughout the country on Forest Service lands in 13 states. The Forest Service manages Job Corps Centers under an Interagency Agreement contract with the DOL, who has oversight responsibility for the 118 Job Corps Centers. The Forest Service is the largest federal agency to manage Job Corps Centers and has been a major operator of the program for 40 years. Costs related to the transfer of the Mingo Job Corps Center to the Department of Agriculture will be minimal.

Forest Service Management of Job Corps Centers

Administered by DOL, the Job Corps is a national program that operates in partnership with states and communities, local Workforce Investment Boards, youth councils, One-Stop Centers and partners, and other youth programs to provide education and training primarily in a residential setting to low income at-risk youth between the ages of 16-24. The objective of Job Corps is to provide young people with the skills they need to obtain and hold a job, enter the Armed Forces, or enroll in advanced training or further education. Current authorization for the Civilian Conservation Centers within the Job Corps program is found in Section 147(c) of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (P.L. 105-220). The Forest Service has been involved in the program since 1964, and has prepared generations of young adults for meaningful work. The Job Corps program as a whole is America's leading residential employment training program.

The Forest Service Job Corps program is a voluntary co-educational (co-ed) program for young people meeting the economic criteria and who are motivated to learn the skills and work ethic they need to start and sustain careers. The civilian conservation Job Corps Centers are primarily residential, thus the Centers provide room, board, and health benefits. Students do not earn a salary; instead they earn a small stipend for personal expenses. Job Corps Centers provide students an opportunity to obtain their high school diploma or a general equivalency diploma (G.E.D.). Students learn a vocational trade such as: cement masonry, welding, clerical, painting, carpentry, operating engineer (heavy equipment), bricklaying, food service and culinary arts, forestry, and other skills; but of utmost importance is students learn social skills.

The student capacity for each Forest Service Civilian Job Corps Center ranges from 168 to 236 co-ed students. In total they serve approximately 6,000 students per year. The cost to run the Forest Service Civilian Conservation Centers annually is approximately \$100 million, which is paid by DOL. Through the years, the agency has learned that hands-on training has been the strength of the program and Job Corps Centers have given back to the communities, and to the public, through community projects, natural resource work on National Forest System lands, maintaining public recreation areas, or fighting wildland fires.

The Forest Service generally performs well on the Department of Labor's, Outcome Measurement System (OMS-10R), which measures the performance of Job Corps Centers. To further the President's Management Agenda the Forest Service recently completed a competitive sourcing study of the 18 Job Corps Center that the agency currently operates. The Federal government was selected as the most efficient operator of those centers. To ensure continued efficiencies the Department plans to conduct additional studies within the next three years if the Mingo Job Corps Center is transferred to the Forest Service.

In closing the Department supports H.R. 3433. This concludes my statement and I would be pleased to answer any questions that you may have.