Senator Tom Harkin Testimony
National Capital Planning Commission Meeting June 1, 2023

I am Tom Harkin, retired U.S. Senator from Iowa. I am a lifelong admirer of President Roosevelt and was there the day the FDR Memorial was dedicated and was the key Senate leader in promoting the addition to the FDR Memorial of the FDR wheelchair statue. I am a member of the FDR Memorial Legacy Committee Advisory Board. For fifteen years, I was one of three presidentially appointed U.S. Commissioners to the Roosevelt-Campobello International Park.

After chairing many hearings during my thirty years in the U.S. Senate, one thing that I learned is that you can never go wrong in hearing different opinions. That is how we make good law, good policy and develop good projects. That is what is needed here.

In the backdrop of all of this is my concern that the FDR Memorial has not been as well maintained and cared for as other presidential memorials. That is unacceptable. And now a project that can put this Memorial at risk, almost sailed through the approval process without sufficient outside vetting and consultation. This must be done before any final approval of this project.

More time is needed to hear other opinions in a forum that allows for exchange between scientists who know this field and can discuss the possible consequences and outcomes.
I applaud the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) for changing this agenda item to "Preliminary" and I hope that NCPC can convene and/or help broker such discussions between NPS, other agencies involved, independent scientists, consulting and concerned parties.

I ask that final approval of this project be postponed a few months to allow for outside vetting and consultation.

I thank the Commission and the Chair for accepting and considering my statement.