



RESOLUTION
OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF TUOLUMNE

WHEREAS, the National Park Service (NPS) has issued a Yosemite National Park Visitor Access Management Plan (VAMP) Draft and Environmental Assessment, seeking a final Record of Decision, so that they may implement a permanent Yosemite visitation control system in 2025; and

WHEREAS, the VAMP Draft has been issued early, several months before the 2024 Pilot Test was to conclude, resulting in an unnecessary rush whereby the complete Pilot Test results cannot be incorporated into the Draft Plan from which a final Record of Decision will be made; and

WHEREAS, the recommended solution in the Draft Plan is more onerous than the current Pilot Test; and

WHEREAS, these actions suggest that the NPS is not trying to mitigate the impacts the visitor system will have on visitors and communities alike; and

WHEREAS, the current system does not prioritize promoting the greatest access for the public while preserving the park experience and addressing overcrowding as recommended in the Merced River Plan, *Chapter 6 User Capacity and Visitor Use Management*, and

WHEREAS, the NPS focuses on flattening the visitation curve while failing to appropriately value the significant unintended consequences associated with its approach to doing so, such as forever damaging gateway community economies; and

WHEREAS, the NPS is compromising system design and future public access to Yosemite by repeatedly testing ***just one approach*** and rushing to attain a self-imposed 2025 deadline to put in place a permanent system; and

WHEREAS, the NPS approach to solving crowding in Yosemite Valley is to limit visitation to the entire park (Alternative B), with significant, harmful consequences to aspiring visitors and gateway communities; and

WHEREAS, this approach unnecessarily restricts access to non-Yosemite Valley areas of the park and needlessly denies the public access to the national park; and

WHEREAS, the long-term access management approach selected has vast implications and impacts on park visitors and on our economies locally and statewide, given its influence on domestic and international travel patterns; and

WHEREAS, a broad coalition, including gateway businesses, tourism bureaus, boards of supervisors, a local US congressman, and more have made it clear, numerous times, over the past couple of years that NPS's recommended *and only* approach will have a dramatically negative impact on aspiring visitors and gateway communities, and this coalition stands ready to work in partnership with NPS to

develop a less onerous, more focused solution to address Valley crowding, including the design of a more creative and thoughtful approach in the form of a different pilot test; and

WHEREAS, the NPS evaluation criteria does not include, nor acknowledge and prioritize negative effects on aspiring visitors, resulting in the final recommended approach (Alternative B) being unacceptable, as it does not achieve the best access for the public while preserving the park & experience; and

WHEREAS, this fact is evidenced almost daily during the pilot phase by numerous empty parking spaces during ticketed entry periods, as well as the parameters of the recommended approach, including denied park entry until 4pm, entry ticket requirements for all of June, July & August, unnecessary and overly onerous spring, summer & fall ticket required dates, and treatment of Saturdays and Sundays the same despite their different visitor dynamics; and

WHEREAS, more time and diversified approaches are needed to test refinements and solutions that won't unduly disenfranchise the public and economically impact gateway communities; and

WHEREAS, the NPS has failed to test a system that takes advantage of the fact that the primary crowding problem is in Yosemite Valley, while the majority of the accessible areas of the park are uncrowded during busy periods; and

WHEREAS, the NPS has an obligation to test such a 'Valley access' versus an "all park access" focused solution as part of its responsibility to do everything possible to avoid creating impediments to visiting our national park while preserving resources and controlling crowding.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the County of Tuolumne Board of Supervisors hereby strongly recommends:

- 1) NPS stop the rush to implement a permanent plan in 2025 and pause the effort to move the Draft Plan to a final Record of Decision; and
- 2) NPS take more time to develop, test and refine the most thoughtful, lowest impact solution possible in partnership with key stakeholders, as the public deserves a solution that also best serves their interests, and more time is needed to achieve this goal; and
- 3) NPS take the time needed to appropriately test a "Valley-access" visitation control system (a refinement of Alternative D) that allows the public access to the rest of the park at all times, which can minimize impacts on aspiring visitors and our communities; and
- 4) Since a Valley-access control system may take time to prepare appropriately and may not be ready for 2025, test Alternative A (no formal system) in 2025 to learn for the first time to what extent the many improvements recently made to Yosemite Valley roads and parking have helped address prior crowding problems. This remains unknown. Such a test will aid in designing the minimum required long-term system to properly balance protection and visitor access; and
- 5) As part of NPS visitation control efforts and testing, NPS should prioritize improving operations and implementing strategies that support visitation to enable the most minimal impact long-term solution possible (e.g., improved entry gate operations, full staffing, marketing campaigns to educate Yosemite visitors about peak visitation issues, and options for avoiding crowds including visiting less crowded areas of the park during peak times).

ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF TUOLUMNE ON _____

AYES:	1st Dist. _____	NOES: _____	Dist. _____
	2nd Dist. _____	_____	Dist. _____
	3rd Dist. _____	ABSENT: _____	Dist. _____
	4th Dist. _____	_____	Dist. _____
	5th Dist. _____	ABSTAIN: _____	Dist. _____

CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

ATTEST: _____
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

No. _____