



County of Bucks
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONERS
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County Commissioners
CHARLES H. MARTIN, *Chairman*
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DIANE M. ELLIS-MARSEGLIA, LCSW

Mr. James Rees
Executive Director
Mount Vernon Ladies' Association
P.O. Box 110
Mount Vernon, VA 22121

March 30, 2009

Dear Mr. Rees:

Among the sites in our nation serving as hallmarks of historical significance, Washington Crossing in Bucks County, Pennsylvania and Mount Vernon, Virginia share much in common. They both pay tribute to a man whose legacy is arguably among the most meaningful in world history.

Mount Vernon is a proud and fitting living memorial to one of our most important founding fathers, a place where visitors from near and far can come to trace the steps of General Washington in his family surroundings.

I am writing to alert you that the visitors' center at Washington Crossing, a Pennsylvania-owned and run park, is now in danger of closing due to disrepair. As you can well imagine, this step deprives Americans of the opportunity to learn about Washington and his troops fatefully crossing the Delaware River. More than half a million visitors from around the world stop here to see the assemblage of 13 historic buildings, Durham boat replicas, and the assembly area and embarkation point.

The Washington Crossing State Park Visitors' Center was built in the 1950s. A building addition was completed in 1976 for the Bicentennial, but a lack of repairs since that time has left the building with leaks, failing heating systems, non-compliant bathrooms, and general deterioration. Some repairs, such as asbestos removal, have been completed, but ongoing work has stopped, and the Commonwealth has not committed funding for its continuation. Additional funding is needed to complete repairs to keep the building, as well as the surrounding grounds, outbuildings, and historic sites, open to the public.

The Bucks County Commissioners recently held a meeting at the park to help with efforts to call attention to the situation. It is my hope that your organization, so dedicated to preserving Washington's memory and contributions, could offer some guidance so that generations to come can visit the site where the Revolutionary War took a turn toward freedom for all Americans. I welcome your input, and I can be reached at 215-348-6424.

Most respectfully,

James F. Cawley, Esq.