

House Bill 19-1255

Mesa Verde National Park License Plate

SPONSORS: Rep. C. Hansen | Rep. M. Catlin | Sen. D. Coram | Sen. R. Zenzinger

Mesa Verde National Park is one of the first 12 UNESCO World Heritage Sites and home to nearly 5,000 known Ancestral Puebloan archaeological sites, including 600 cliff dwellings and thousands of ancient artifacts. The treasures at Mesa Verde National Park are outdoor ancient museums that require curatorial care and preservation. Entrance fees from nearly 600,000 visitors and annual federal government funding cover only part of the Park's needs to cover expenses, making financial support that a special license will provide critical for improvements, maintenance, special projects and educational endeavors.

Why the Park needs your support for the license plate:

- **Budget deficit.** Entrance fees and federal budget appropriations fall short of the Parks needs. Mesa Verde National Park has a deferred project deficit of \$57million. For example funds not in the federal budget for the Park are needed to stabilize Spruce Tree House and Cliff Palace cliff dwellings. Each license plate sold will contribute \$30.00 to the Park for these important unfunded needs.

An example of how outside funding supports the care of the Park is work done at Cliff Palace. Cliff Palace, the crown jewel of Mesa Verde National Park, has suffered structural problems from an unstable foundation on the southern end of the ruin, which has caused the site to slide downhill at uneven rates, leading to cracks, falling walls and general instability. The deterioration has lead to heroic stabilization efforts to preserve the structure. Money raised by the Mesa Verde Foundation has helped fund the ongoing project.

- **Mesa Verde contributes to the Colorado economy.** The 614,000 visitors to Mesa Verde in 2017 spent \$55.4 million in communities near the park. That spending supported 814 jobs in the local area and had a cumulative benefit to the local economy of \$66.8 million.
- **Park recognition.** Nestled in the Four Corner area of Colorado, the Mesa Verde National Park License plate will spread the word of this Colorado treasure.
- **Mesa Verde Educates.** Mesa Verde, Spanish for "green table," offers an unparalleled opportunity to see and experience a unique cultural and physical landscape. The architecture preserved at Mesa Verde reflects more than 700 years of human history.