

**GEORGE ALLEN**  
VIRGINIA

204 RUSSELL SENATE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4604

(202) 224-4024  
(202) 224-5432 (FAX)

<http://allen.senate.gov/email.html>



COMMITTEES:  
COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND  
TRANSPORTATION  
ENERGY  
FOREIGN RELATIONS  
SMALL BUSINESS AND  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP

## United States Senate

May 25, 2005

The Honorable Shelia P. Burke  
Smithsonian Institution  
USAMNP SIP 219 MRC 040  
Post Office Box 37012  
Washington, DC 20013-7012

Dear Secretary Burke:

On May 10<sup>th</sup>, *The Washington Post* reported that you are reconsidering the request made by Open Park to use the rooftops of several Smithsonian museum buildings to provide free public Wi-Fi service on the National Mall. Since this service will provide an important benefit to visitors of the museums, I urge you to approve Open Park's proposal. Internet access will aid visitors to the museums with no financial burden on either the Smithsonian or the American taxpayers, since this project is being funded solely by private donations.

I applaud the efforts the Institution has taken to refurbish its facilities and to find new ways of fulfilling its basic educational and scientific mission. The important step of expanding the institutions on-line educational publications and daily event calendars has been of particular interest. Access to these Internet sites from the National Mall will be of great benefit to museum-goers in maximizing their visits to the Smithsonian and other sites in the region.

In addition, a public Internet service on the Mall will provide a valuable community service while continuing to support the Smithsonian's educational programs. The Open Park network also provides an emergency communications lifeline on the Mall in the event of a homeland security incident or natural disaster. The network will aid in notifying visitors and staff of an evacuation if other mobile communications facilities are overloaded, as occurred on 9/11.

CENTRAL VIRGINIA

507 EAST FRANKLIN STREET  
RICHMOND, VA 23219

(804) 771-2221  
(804) 771-8313 (FAX)

HAMPTON ROADS

222 CENTRAL PARK AVENUE, #120  
VIRGINIA BEACH, VA 23462

(757) 518-1674  
(757) 518-1679 (FAX)

WESTERN AND VALLEY

3140 CHAPARRAL DRIVE, #C-101  
ROANOKE, VA 24018

(540) 772-4236  
(540) 772-6870 (FAX)

SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA

332 CUMMINGS STREET, SUITE C  
ABINGDON, VA 24210

(276) 676-2646  
(276) 676-2588 (FAX)

NORTHERN VIRGINIA

2214 ROCK HILL ROAD, SUITE 100  
HERNDON, VA 20170

(703) 435-0039  
(703) 435-3446 (FAX)

The Honorable Shelia P. Burke  
May 25, 2005  
Page Two

Thank you for your consideration of Open Park's request for a trial of its free public Internet service on the Mall. Please treat this letter in conformance with all applicable procedural rules and ethical guidelines.

With warm regards, I remain

Sincerely,



George Allen