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SENATE

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QUINEBAUG AND SHETUCKET RIVERS VALLEY NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR AMENDMENTS ACT OF 2007

SEPTEMBER 17, 2007.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. BINGAMAN, from the Committee on Energy and Natural
Resources, submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany S. 1182]

The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, to which was referred the bill (S. 1182) to amend the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor Act of 1994 to increase the authorization of appropriations and modify the date on which the authority of the Secretary of the Interior terminates under the Act, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon with an amendment and recommends that the bill, as amended, do pass.

The amendment is as follows:

Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor Amendments Act of 2007”.

SEC. 2. QUINEBAUG AND SHETUCKET RIVERS VALLEY NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR.

(a) TERMINATION OF AUTHORITY.—Section 106(b) of the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor Act of 1994 (16 U.S.C. 461 note; Public Law 103-449) is amended by striking “September 30, 2009” and inserting “September 30, 2015”.

(b) EVALUATION; REPORT.—Section 106 of the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor Act of 1994 (16 U.S.C. 461 note; Public Law 103-449) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(c) EVALUATION; REPORT.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 3 years before the date on which authority for Federal funding terminates for the Corridor, the Secretary shall—

“(A) conduct an evaluation of the accomplishments of the Corridor; and

“(B) prepare a report in accordance with paragraph (3).

“(2) EVALUATION.—An evaluation conducted under paragraph (1)(A) shall—

“(A) assess the progress of the management entity with respect to—

“(i) accomplishing the purposes of this title for the Corridor; and

- “(ii) achieving the goals and objectives of the management plan for the Corridor;
 - “(B) analyze the Federal, State, local, and private investments in the Corridor to determine the leverage and impact of the investments; and
 - “(C) review the management structure, partnership relationships, and funding of the Corridor for purposes of identifying the critical components for sustainability of the Corridor.
- “(3) REPORT.—
- “(A) IN GENERAL.—Based on the evaluation conducted under paragraph (1)(A), the Secretary shall prepare a report that includes recommendations for the future role of the National Park Service, if any, with respect to the Corridor.
 - “(B) REQUIRED ANALYSIS.—If the report prepared under subparagraph (A) recommends that Federal funding for the Corridor be reauthorized, the report shall include an analysis of—
 - “(i) ways in which Federal funding for the Corridor may be reduced or eliminated; and
 - “(ii) the appropriate time period necessary to achieve the recommended reduction or elimination.
 - “(C) SUBMISSION TO CONGRESS.—On completion of the report, the Secretary shall submit the report to—
 - “(i) the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate; and
 - “(ii) the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives.”.

(c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section 109(a) of the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor Act of 1994 (16 U.S.C. 461 note; Public Law 103–449) is amended by striking “\$10,000,000” and inserting “\$15,000,000”.

PURPOSE

The purpose of S. 1182 is to amend the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor Act of 1994 to increase the appropriation ceiling for the heritage corridor and to extend the period in which the corridor is authorized to receive Federal funding.

BACKGROUND AND NEED

The Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor, located in northeastern Connecticut and Massachusetts, was first authorized in 1994 (Public Law 103–449), and was the first national heritage area to be managed by a non-profit organization, the Quinebaug-Shetucket Heritage Corridor, Inc.

The Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley has been called “The Last Green Valley” in the sprawling metropolitan Boston-to-Washington corridor. At night the region appears distinctively dark amid the urban and suburban glow when viewed from satellites or aircraft. The green fields and forests confirm the surprisingly rural character of the 1,085 square-mile area defined by the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers systems and the rugged hills that surround them. The area includes two of the most scenic and productive river systems in New England, more than 80 ponds and lakes with exceptional water qualities and habitats, 7 state forests, including the largest in Connecticut, 16 state wildlife management areas, and 5 state parks. The area is more than ten times the size of Acadia, the largest national park in the northeast. Forest and farmland make up more than 70 percent of its 695,000 acres, yet it lies only an hour from 3 of New England’s 4 largest urban areas.

The original heritage corridor only included land in Connecticut. In 1999, the heritage corridor was expanded to include additional

communities in Connecticut and Massachusetts (Public Law 106–149). The 1999 amendments also extended the heritage corridor’s original 7-year authorization through 2009, and its authorization ceiling was increased to \$10 million, consistent with levels established for other national heritage areas.

In 2006 the management entity for the heritage corridor adopted a plan entitled *The Trail to 2015*, a Sustainability Plan for the Last Green Valley. The plan proposes that the Federal funding authorization be extended through 2015 to allow the heritage corridor to ultimately become financially self-sufficient.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

S. 1182 was introduced by Senators Dodd, Lieberman, Kerry, and Kennedy on April 20, 2007. The Subcommittee on National Parks held a hearing on the bill on July 12, 2007.

At its business meeting on July 25, 2007, the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources ordered S. 1182 favorably reported, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, in open business session on July 25, 2007, by a voice vote of a quorum present, recommends that the Senate pass S. 1182, if amended as described herein.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT

During its consideration of S. 1182, the Committee adopted an amendment in the nature of a substitute. The amendment deletes the Congressional findings section and adds a requirement that the Secretary of the Interior conduct an evaluation of the heritage corridor not later than three years before the Federal funding authority terminates. The purpose of the evaluation is to assess whether the management entity for the heritage corridor achieved the goals and objectives identified in the management plan and accomplished the purposes for which the heritage corridor was established. The Secretary is required to submit the report to Congress. The amendment is explained in detail in the section-by-section analysis, below.

SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

Section 1 contains the short title, the “Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor Amendments Act of 2007”.

Section 2(a) extends the date on which Federal authority for the heritage corridor terminates from 2009 until 2015.

Subsection (b) amends section 106 of the enabling legislation (Public Law 103–449) to add a new subsection requiring the Secretary of the Interior to conduct an evaluation of the heritage corridor not later than September 30, 2012 (three years before the authority for Federal funding terminates). The purpose of the evaluation is to assess whether the management entity for the heritage corridor achieved the goals and objectives identified in the management plan and accomplished the purposes for which the heritage

corridor was established. The Secretary is required to submit the report to the Congressional authorizing committees.

Subsection (c) increases the appropriation ceiling for the heritage corridor from \$10 million to \$15 million.

COST AND BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS

The following estimate of costs of this measure has been provided by the Congressional Budget Office:

AUGUST 3, 2007.

Hon. JEFF BINGAMAN,
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Natural Resources,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has prepared the enclosed cost estimate for S. 1182, the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor Amendments Act of 2007.

If you wish further details on this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them. The CBO staff contact is Daniel Hoople.

Sincerely,

PETER R. ORSZAG.

Enclosure.

S. 1182—Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor Amendments Act of 2007

S. 1182 would authorize the appropriation of an additional \$5 million to the National Park Service (NPS) to provide grants and technical assistance to state and local governments for the maintenance and enhancement of the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor and extend the authorization period through 2015. Assuming the appropriation of the specified funds, CBO estimates that implementing S. 1182 would cost \$3 million over the 2010–2012 period and \$3 million after 2012. Enacting the legislation would not affect direct spending or revenues.

S. 1182 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act. State and local governments could benefit from continued grants and technical assistance under the bill.

In 1999, the Congress authorized the appropriation of up to \$1 million in each year through 2009 (up to \$10 million total) for the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor (see Public Law 106–149). According to the NPS, the Congress has appropriated about \$6 million for the Corridor through 2007. S. 1182 would increase the total amount authorized to be appropriated for the Corridor to \$15 million, but would not change the \$1 million maximum per year. As such, CBO estimates that implementing S. 1182 would have no effect in 2008 and 2009 because current law already authorizes funding for those years. This estimate assumes the appropriation of \$1 million in each year (the maximum amount authorized under the bill) from 2010 through 2015.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Daniel Hoople. This estimate was approved by Peter H. Fontaine, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

REGULATORY IMPACT EVALUATION

In compliance with paragraph 11(b) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee makes the following evaluation of the regulatory impact which would be incurred in carrying out S. 1182. The bill is not a regulatory measure in the sense of imposing Government-established standards or significant economic responsibilities on private individuals and businesses.

No personal information would be collected in administering the program. Therefore, there would be no impact on personal privacy.

Little, if any, additional paperwork would result from the enactment of S. 1182, as ordered reported.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

The testimony provided by the Department of the Interior at the July 12, 2007 Subcommittee hearing follows:

STATEMENT OF KATHERINE H. STEVENSON, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, BUSINESS SERVICES, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to appear before your committee to present the views of the Department of the Interior on S. 1182, a bill to amend the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor Act of 1994. S. 1182 would increase the ceiling on appropriations to the heritage area from \$10,000,000 to \$15,000,000 and extend the termination date of the Secretary of the Interior's financial commitment from September 30, 2009 to September 30, 2015.

The Department believes it is premature to consider S. 1182 based on the fact that the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor has two years remaining on its authorization and the Department also would like time to review and make recommendations on the evaluation recently completed by the Corridor that details its accomplishments and provides a plan for its future. Therefore, the Department opposes S. 1182 at this time.

Less than a year ago, there were 27 heritage areas. Today, there are 37. Our understanding is that national heritage areas are locally driven grassroots efforts to preserve resources that were intended to operate independent of Federal funding at the end of the authorization period. While the National Park Service would continue to support the heritage areas through technical assistance, the heritage areas were to be largely self-sufficient after an initial period of financial assistance from NPS. This was the understanding, particularly for those heritage areas created or reauthorized since 1996.

The Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor, also known as The Last Green Valley, was authorized in 1994 and comprised 25 communities in northeastern Connecticut. It began receiving federal funding in 1996 with appropriations through 2007 totaling \$6,303,750. It became the first national heritage area to be

managed by a non-profit organization, the Quinebaug-Shetucket Heritage Corridor, Inc. Its first plan, *Vision to Reality: A Management Plan*, was completed in 1997.

In 1999, the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor (QSHC) was expanded to include 10 additional communities in its watershed in Connecticut and Massachusetts, making it the second bi-state national heritage area in the country. At the same time, its original seven-year authorization was extended through 2009 and a new ceiling of \$10,000,000 was authorized with an annual amount not to exceed \$1,000,000, in keeping with other similar national heritage areas. At that time, *Vision 2010: A Plan for the Next Ten Years* was completed, along with the Interpretive Initiative for the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor. With the additional federal investment and larger regional focus, many successful programs were initiated.

The National Park System Advisory Board in its report entitled *Charting a Future for National Heritage Areas* recognized the important role of national heritage areas in expanding conservation stewardship and in identifying and preserving significant historic resources. The report also recognized that national heritage areas need a legislative foundation that establishes a clear process for designation, administration, and evaluation to become self-sufficient.

The Administration's proposal for national heritage area program legislation, which was transmitted to Congress in July 2006, would provide such a framework. Bills were introduced in the 109th Congress (S. 243, H.R. 760 and H.R. 6287) that incorporated the majority of the provisions of the Administration's proposal, and S. 243 passed the Senate. During the 110th Congress, a similar heritage area program bill, S. 278, has been introduced.

The proposed legislative framework recommended that, three years prior to the cessation of Federal funding, the Secretary conduct an evaluation and prepare a report on the accomplishments, sustainability, and recommendations, if any, for the future of a designated national heritage area. This evaluation would examine the accomplishments of the heritage area in meeting the goals of the management plan; analyze the leveraging and impact of investments to the heritage area; identify the critical components of the management structure and sustainability of the heritage area; and recommend what future role, if any, the NPS should have with respect to the heritage area.

Under its existing authorization, the QSHC will continue to receive annual federal funding for two more years. During last year's hearing on another reauthorization bill for the area, the Department recommended that the area begin to evaluate how it will sustain its efforts to protect resources when federal funding ends in 2009. To this end, the QSHC has recently completed an evaluation on the heritage area that included extensive public input during the process, but the NPS has not had a chance to officially review the study.

The nearly 1,100-square miles of The Last Green Valley provide a challenge to cohesive and engaging regional interpretation of natural and historical resources. Over the past several years, QSHC has developed a number of interpretive strategies to educate residents and visitors alike, while providing an entertaining base from which to generate tourism. For example, Last Green Valley Ventures is a program that (1) circulates people and information throughout the region; (2) provides adequate visitor services, orientation to The Last Green Valley and interpretation of the many regional themes; (3) assures quality, consistency and hospitality; and (4) collects important statistical data to inform future marketing and programming. The program combines current assets of The Last Green Valley, the compendium of existing research and support brochures, the complimenting businesses offering unique experiences, and partners from public and private sectors into one cohesive product.

Last Green Valley Ventures also dovetails with an on-line educational resources guide, Valley Quest, used by regional educators, parents and youth group leaders to educate and inspire the future stewards of the QSHC.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to comment. This concludes my prepared remarks and I will be happy to answer any questions you or other committee members might have.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

In compliance with paragraph 12 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, changes in existing law made by S. 1182, as ordered reported, are shown as follows (existing law proposed to be omitted is enclosed in black brackets, new matter is printed in italic, existing law in which no change is proposed is shown in roman):

PUBLIC LAW 103-449—NOV. 2, 1994; 16 U.S.C. 461 NOTE

AN ACT To establish the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor in the State of Connecticut and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and for other purposes

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

TITLE I—QUINEBAUG AND SHETUCKET RIVERS VALLEY NATIONAL HERITAGE CORRIDOR

SECTION 101. SHORT TITLE.

This title may be cited as the “Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor Act of 1994.”

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SEC. 106. DUTIES OF THE SECRETARY.

(a) ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary and the heads of other Federal agencies shall, upon request of the management entity assist the management entity in the implementation of the plan. Such assistance shall include providing funds authorized under section 109 and technical assistance necessary to carry out this Act.

(b) TERMINATION OF AUTHORITY.—The Secretary may not make any grants or provide any assistance under this act after **[September 30, 2009]** *September 30, 2015*.

(c) EVALUATION; REPORT.—

(1) *IN GENERAL.*—*Not later than 3 years before the date on which authority for Federal funding terminates for the Corridor, the Secretary shall—*

(A) *conduct an evaluation of the accomplishments of the Corridor; and*

(B) *prepare a report in accordance with paragraph (3).*

(2) *EVALUATION.*—*An evaluation conducted under paragraph (1)(A) shall—*

(A) *assess the progress of the management entity with respect to—*

(i) *accomplishing the purposes of this title for the Corridor; and*

(ii) *achieving the goals and objectives of the management plan for the Corridor.*

(B) *analyze the Federal, State, local, and private investments in the Corridor to determine the leverage and impacts of the investments; and*

(C) *review the management structure, partnership relationships, and funding of the Corridor for purposes of identifying the critical components for sustainability of the Corridor.*

(3) *REPORT.*—

(A) *IN GENERAL.*—*Based on the evaluation conducted under paragraph (1)(A), the Secretary shall prepare a report that includes recommendations for the future role of the National Park Service, if any, with respect to the Corridor.*

(B) *REQUIRED ANALYSIS.*—*If the report prepared under subsection (A) recommends that Federal funding for the Corridor be reauthorized, the report shall include an analysis of—*

(i) *ways in which Federal funding for the Corridor may be reduced or eliminated; and*

(ii) *the appropriate time period necessary to achieve the recommended reduction or elimination.*

(C) *SUBMISSION TO CONGRESS.*—*On completion of the report, the Secretary shall submit the report to—*

(i) *the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate; and*

(ii) *the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives.*

* * * * *

SEC. 109. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be appropriated under this title not more than \$1,000,000 for any fiscal year. Not more than a total of ~~【\$10,000,000】~~ \$15,000,000 may be appropriated for the Corridor under this title after the date of enactment of the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor Reauthorization Act of 1999.

(b) FIFTY PERCENT MATCH.—Federal funding provided under this title may not exceed 50 percent of the total cost of any assistance or grant provided or authorized under this title.

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