

Union Calendar No. 113

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2729

[Report No. 111–207]

To authorize the designation of National Environmental Research Parks by the Secretary of Energy, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 4, 2009

Mr. LUJÁN introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Science and Technology

JULY 14, 2009

Additional sponsors: Mr. BAIRD, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mrs. BIGGERT, Ms. GIFFORDS, and Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas

JULY 14, 2009

Reported with an amendment, committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, and ordered to be printed

[Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in *italie*]

[For text of introduced bill, see copy of bill as introduced on June 4, 2009]

A BILL

To authorize the designation of National Environmental Research Parks by the Secretary of Energy, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. FINDINGS.**

4 *Congress finds the following:*

5 *(1) The National Environmental Research Parks*
6 *are unique outdoor laboratories that provide*
7 *opportunities for environmental studies on protected*
8 *lands around Department of Energy facilities.*

9 *(2) In 1972, the Atomic Energy Commission*
10 *established its first official environmental research*
11 *park at the Savannah River site in South Carolina.*

12 *(3) In 1976, the Department of Energy defined*
13 *the mission for the research parks in accordance with*
14 *the recommendations of the multiagency review team*
15 *for environmental research activities at the Savannah*
16 *River site.*

17 *(4) The mission of the research parks is to—*

18 *(A) conduct research and education activi-*
19 *ties to assess and document environmental effects*
20 *associated with energy and weapons use;*

21 *(B) explore methods for eliminating or*
22 *minimizing adverse effects of energy development*
23 *and nuclear materials on the environment;*

24 *(C) train people in ecological and*
25 *environmental sciences; and*

1 (D) educate the public.

2 (5) *The seven National Environmental Research*
3 *Parks are located within six major ecological regions*
4 *of the United States, covering more than half of the*
5 *Nation.*

6 (6) *The parks are especially valuable research*
7 *sites because within their borders they provide secure*
8 *settings for scientists to conduct long-term research on*
9 *a broad range of subjects including—*

10 (A) *plant succession;*

11 (B) *biomass production;*

12 (C) *population ecology;*

13 (D) *radioecology;*

14 (E) *ecological restoration; and*

15 (F) *thermal effects on freshwater ecosystems.*

16 (7) *The parks maintain several long-term data*
17 *sets that are available nowhere else in the United*
18 *States or in the world on amphibian populations,*
19 *bird populations, and soil moisture and plant water*
20 *stress. These data sets are uniquely valuable for the*
21 *detection of long-term shifts in climate.*

22 (8) *The maintenance of these parks by the*
23 *Department of Energy is consistent with statutory*
24 *obligations to promote sound environmental*

1 *stewardship of Federal lands and to safeguard sites*
2 *containing cultural and archeological resources.*

3 *(9) Public education and outreach activities*
4 *carried out on these sites provide unique learning*
5 *opportunities, promote a stronger connection between*
6 *these Federal facilities and the surrounding*
7 *communities, and enhance public confidence that the*
8 *Department of Energy is fulfilling its environmental*
9 *stewardship responsibilities.*

10 **SEC. 2. NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH PARKS.**

11 *(a) DESIGNATION.—The Secretary of Energy shall*
12 *designate the seven National Environmental Research*
13 *Parks located on Department of Energy sites as permanent*
14 *protected outdoor research reserves for the purposes of*
15 *conducting long-term environmental research on the*
16 *impacts of human activities on the natural environment.*
17 *The seven National Environmental Research Parks shall*
18 *include—*

19 *(1) the Savannah River National Environmental*
20 *Research Park;*

21 *(2) the Idaho National Environmental Research*
22 *Park;*

23 *(3) the Los Alamos National Environmental*
24 *Research Park;*

1 (4) *the Fermi Lab National Environmental*
2 *Research Park;*

3 (5) *the Hanford National Environmental*
4 *Research Park;*

5 (6) *the Oak Ridge National Environmental*
6 *Research Park; and*

7 (7) *the Nevada National Environmental*
8 *Research Park.*

9 (b) *PURPOSES.—Each site shall support—*

10 (1) *environmental research and monitoring ac-*
11 *tivities to characterize and monitor present and*
12 *future site conditions, and serve as control areas for*
13 *comparison with environmental impacts of*
14 *Department of Energy land management, energy*
15 *technology development, remediation, and other site*
16 *activities outside the National Environmental*
17 *Research Park areas. Areas of research and*
18 *monitoring on the sites may include—*

19 (A) *ecology of the site and the region;*

20 (B) *population biology and ecology;*

21 (C) *radioecology;*

22 (D) *effects of climate variability and change*
23 *on ecosystems;*

24 (E) *ecosystem science;*

25 (F) *pollution fate and transport research;*

1 (G) surface and groundwater modeling; and
2 (H) environmental impacts of development
3 and use of energy generation technologies,
4 including renewable energy technologies; and
5 (2) public education and outreach activities con-
6 sistent with subsection (d).

7 (c) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT.—To ensure the
8 independence of the research, monitoring, public education,
9 and outreach activities conducted on each site, the Secretary
10 shall enter into a cooperative agreement with a university,
11 community college, or consortium of institutions of higher
12 education with expertise in ecology and environmental
13 science of the region in which the National Environmental
14 Research Park is located.

15 (d) ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND OUTREACH.—
16 Each site shall support an outreach program to inform the
17 public of the diverse ecological activities conducted at the
18 park and to educate students at various levels in
19 environmental science. Program activities may include—
20 (1) on-site and in-classroom education programs
21 for elementary and secondary students;
22 (2) presentations to school, civic, and
23 professional groups;
24 (3) exhibits at local and regional events;

1 (4) *development of educational projects and*
2 *materials for students at all levels;*

3 (5) *undergraduate and community college in-*
4 *ternships and graduate research opportunities; and*

5 (6) *regularly scheduled public tours.*

6 (e) *COORDINATION.—The Secretary of Energy shall*
7 *designate a National Environmental Research Park*
8 *Coordinator within the Department of Energy Office of*
9 *Science. The Coordinator shall—*

10 (1) *coordinate research activities among the*
11 *National Environmental Research Parks as appro-*
12 *priate;*

13 (2) *ensure that information on best practices for*
14 *research, education, and outreach activities is shared*
15 *among the sites; and*

16 (3) *serve as liaison to other Federal agencies to*
17 *facilitate collaborative work at the Parks.*

18 (f) *AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are*
19 *authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of Energy,*
20 *acting through the Director of the Office of Science, for*
21 *carrying out this section \$35,000,000, including \$5,000,000*
22 *for each National Environmental Research Park, for each*
23 *of the fiscal years 2010 through 2014.*

1 **SEC. 3. SAVINGS.**

2 *Nothing in this Act shall be construed to limit the ac-*
3 *tivities that the Federal Government may carry out or au-*
4 *thorize on a site on which a National Environmental*
5 *Research Park is located.*

6 **SEC. 4. SUMMER INSTITUTES PROGRAM.**

7 *The National Environmental Research Parks may be*
8 *utilized to provide educational opportunities through the*
9 *Summer Institutes program authorized in section 3185 of*
10 *the Department of Energy Science Education Enhancement*
11 *Act (42 U.S.C. 7381n).*

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