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ANGEL ISLAND IMMIGRATION STATION RESTORATION AND PRESERVATION ACT

OCTOBER 19, 2005.—Ordered to be printed

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

R E P O R T

[To accompany H.R. 606]

The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, to which was referred the Act (H.R. 606) to authorize appropriations to the Secretary of the Interior for the restoration of the Angel Island Immigration Station in the State of California, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon without amendment and recommends that the Act do pass.

PURPOSE OF THE MEASURE

The purpose of H.R. 606 is to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to provide up to \$15 million in grants to help restore the Angel Island Immigration Station in California.

BACKGROUND AND NEED

Between the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, millions of people came to America in pursuit of a better way of life. On the east coast, most of the immigrants were met by the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. On the west coast, between 1910 and 1940, most entered the United States through the wooden buildings of Angel Island, in the San Francisco Bay. These immigrants were Australians and New Zealanders, Canadians, Mexicans, Central and South Americans, Russians, and in particular, Asians. There, during this period of the great migrations, they met with a reception quite unlike that given to European immigrants on the east coast.

Around the middle of the 19th century, immigrants from southern China began arriving in the United States in large numbers,

fleeing from a land stricken by both natural and man-made disasters and a collapsing rural economy. Almost all of these immigrants arrived in San Francisco. Though initially welcomed, when the California economy took a downturn in the 1870s, economic problems were laid at the feet of this highly visible minority by organized labor, newspapers, and politicians. A number of laws were passed at the local and State levels targeting the Chinese. In addition, Congress passed several laws targeting immigration from Asia. With the passing of the first of these laws, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, America had limited immigration on the basis of nationality or race for the first time. Subsequent laws severely curtailed each successive wave of immigration from Asia which came to replace Chinese immigrant workers.

The question soon arose of how to actually implement the Chinese Exclusion Act. Initially, customs service officers individually and arbitrarily administered exclusion policies; in time, procedures became standardized by the Bureau of Immigration. As part of this system, Immigration officials planned a new facility on Angel Island, the largest island in the San Francisco Bay, far from the mainland. The Angel Island facility prevented Chinese immigrants from communicating with those in San Francisco, isolated immigrants with communicable diseases, and, like the prison on nearby Alcatraz Island, was escape proof. In January 1910, over the objections of Chinese community leaders, this hastily-built immigration station was opened on the northeastern edge of Angel Island, ready to receive its first immigrants. The Chinese Exclusion Act was finally repealed in 1943, although immigration from China was strictly limited until 1965.

The Angel Island Immigration Station was eventually closed after a fire destroyed many of the buildings in 1940. It was later used as a prisoner of war processing center during World War II. Following the war, the site was abandoned. In 1963 the State of California established Angel Island as a State park.

In 1997, the Angel Island Immigration Station was designated as a National Historic Landmark by the Secretary of the Interior. In 1999, Save America's Treasures, a project of the National Trust and the White House Millennium Council, designated the Angel Island Immigration Station as one of its Official Projects, providing \$500,000 for the preservation of the Chinese poems carved into the barracks walls. In March 2000, California voters passed a State bond measure that set aside \$15 million specifically for restoration of the Angel Island Immigration Station.

H.R. 606 would authorize \$15 million in matching Federal funds to be utilized for the restoration of the Angel Island Immigration Station.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

H.R. 606 was introduced by Representative Woolsey on February 2, 2005. The House of Representatives passed H.R. 606 by a voice vote on May 23, 2005. Identical legislation, S. 262, was introduced by Senators Feinstein, Boxer, and Akaka on February 2, 2005. Similar legislation, S. 2833, was introduced by Senator Feinstein in the 108th Congress. The House of Representatives passed a similar measure in the 108th Congress, H.R. 4469, sponsored by Congress-

woman Woolsey. The House passed the bill by a voice vote on September 28, 2004, although no further action occurred in the Senate.

The Subcommittee on National Parks held a hearing on S. 262 on April 28, 2005 (S. Hrg. 109–74). At its business meeting on September 28, 2005 the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources ordered H.R. 606 favorably reported.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, in open business session on September 28, 2005, by a voice vote of a quorum present, recommends that the Senate pass H.R. 606 as described herein.

SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

Section 1 entitles the bill “Angel Island Immigration Station Restoration and Preservation Act”.

Section 2 sets forth congressional findings.

Section 3 authorizes the appropriation of \$15 million to the Secretary of the Interior for the restoration of the Angel Island Immigration Station, in coordination with the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation and the California Department of Parks and Recreation. This section also requires that Federal funding not exceed 50 percent of the total from all sources spent to restore the Angel Island Immigration Station.

COST AND BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS

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

H.R. 606—Angel Island Immigration Station Restoration and Preservation Act

H.R. 606 would authorize the appropriation of \$15 million to restore the Angel Island Immigration Station, a California state park in the San Francisco Bay. Assuming appropriation of this amount, CBO estimates that the National Park Service would disburse the \$15 million over the next three or four years as grants to the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation, a local nonprofit organization. Most of this funding would be used to restore the station hospital.

H.R. 606 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Deborah Reis. 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 H.R. 606. 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 H.R. 606, as ordered reported.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

The views of the Administration on S. 262 were included in testimony received by the Committee at a hearing on the bill on April 28, 2005 as follows:

STATEMENT OF MICHAEL SOUKUP, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR,
NATURAL RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP AND SCIENCE, NA-
TIONAL 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 H.R. 606, to authorize appropriations to the Secretary of the Interior for the restoration of the Angel Island Immigration Station in the State of California. This legislation would authorize appropriations of \$15 million for restoration of the Angel Island Immigration Station Hospital and for other station facilities if excess funds remained.

The Department commends the work that is being done to restore the Angel Island Immigration Station at Angel Island State Park and to make it more accessible to visitors. In fact, the National Park Service has been an active partner in that effort. However, we oppose this legislation. We believe it is inappropriate to use limited National Park Service appropriations to pay for restoration projects for non-National Park Service structures. We encourage the State of California, California State Parks, and the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation to continue seeking other sources of funding for this very worthy project.

For many years, the Department has opposed legislation authorizing appropriations for non-National Park Service construction projects. Many of these projects, like the restoration of the Angel Island Immigration Station, represent an important contribution to the preservation of our Nation's history. However, each time such legislation is enacted and appropriations follow, it further reduces a limited amount of discretionary funds available to address the priority needs of our national parks and other programs administered by the National Park Service. With the emphasis we have placed on the President's initiative to reduce the deferred maintenance backlog, it has become more important than ever to avoid authorizing funding for non-National Park Service projects that would likely draw funds from the National Park Service's budget.

Angel Island is located in San Francisco Bay, not far from Alcatraz Island. The Federal Government built the Angel Island Immigration Station in Winslow Cove and operated it between 1910 and 1940 to enforce the Chinese Exclusion Act. Over one million new arrivals to the United States, including Russians, Chinese, Japanese, Hispanics,

and others, were processed through the immigration station, although some never set foot on the island.

The most poignant history associated with Angel Island is that of detained Chinese immigrants. Angel Island is often referred to as the “Ellis Island of the West,” although unlike Ellis Island, where immigrants typically spent one day, many of the Chinese immigrants were detained for weeks, months or even years. The Chinese Exclusion Act, in effect from 1882 until 1943, required Chinese immigrants to go to extra lengths to prove that they met the necessary requirements to be allowed to stay. Over 100 poems carved by detainees on walls of the Detention Barracks, expressing the fear, hopes, and despair of those with uncertain futures, provide a first-hand historical commentary on the plight of these immigrants.

The immigration station was closed in 1940 after a fire destroyed the Administration Building and American policy shifted in support of China in World War II. The U.S. Army used the buildings during World War II for internment of prisoners. The Army later vacated the site, and it fell into disrepair. Angel Island, which also had other military installations, was declared surplus to Federal needs and transferred to the State of California for park purposes in 1963. Today, on the 13-acre site, only the Detention Barracks, Hospital, Power House, Pump House and Mule Barn remain intact, and only the Detention Barracks is open to visitors. Angel Island State Park is reached by ferry and used for sightseeing, hiking, picnicking, educational trips, and limited camping.

The Secretary of the Interior designated the Angel Island Immigration Station as a National Historic Landmark in 1997. In late 1998, Congress appropriated \$100,000 for the National Park Service to evaluate the feasibility and desirability of preserving and interpreting sites within Golden Gate National Recreation Area, including Angel Island Immigration Station, that are related to immigration; we are continuing to work to complete this study. A few months later, the National Park Service, California State Parks, and the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation formed a partnership consortium to undertake two major projects: (1) develop a restoration and interpretation strategy for restoration work at the Angel Island Immigration Station, and (2) explore the feasibility of developing a Pacific Coast Immigration Museum to provide interpretation and education related to immigration and migration to the West Coast. The consortium’s efforts led to securing \$15 million in state funds and \$1 million in grants and donations for restoration work on the immigration station.

The National Park Service has also contributed technical assistance and managed contracts for reports that were completed in 2002—an Historic Structures Report, Building Condition Assessments, a Poem Preservation Study, and Cultural Landscape Report for the immigration station. These reports were intended to serve as baseline studies to guide preservation and use decisions. In addition, in 2000, the Angel Island Immigration Station received a \$500,000 grant for conservation work through the National Park Service’s Save America’s Treasures program.

As a follow through on the consortium's agenda, the National Park Service has also been the conduit for appropriations from Congress of \$280,000 in FY 2002 and \$385,000 in FY 2004 for in-depth feasibility studies for the Pacific Coast Immigration Museum.

As the activities listed above show, the National Park Service is playing an active role in promoting the commemoration of immigration history on the West Coast, which is unquestionably a nationally significant story, by working in partnership with the State of California and the Angel Island Immigration Station Foundation. We are proud of the work the Service is doing toward planning and promoting the restoration of the immigration station and the Pacific Coast Immigration Museum, as these two entities will make an important contribution to the understanding of immigration history in this part of the country—and they will be significant additions to the historical attractions within Golden Gate National Recreation Area. However, we do not believe it is appropriate for the National Park Service budget to be used as a major funding source for the restoration of the Angel Island Immigration Station, a state property.

Mr. Chairman, that completes my statement. I would be happy to answer any questions you or the other members of the committee may have.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

In compliance with paragraph 12 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee notes that no changes in existing law are made by the Act H.R. 606, as ordered reported.

