

106TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 776

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 12, 1999

Referred to the Committee on Resources

AN ACT

To authorize the National Park Service to conduct a feasibility study for the preservation of the Loess Hills in western Iowa.

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. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Loess Hills Preserva-
5 tion Study Act of 1999”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.**

2 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

3 (1) the Loess Hills encompasses 600,000 acres
4 in western Iowa, having been formed by ancient gla-
5 ciers and hundreds of centuries of westerly winds
6 blowing soil across the Missouri River, which were
7 then deposited in Iowa;

8 (2) this area is the largest Loess formation in
9 the United States, and one of the two largest in the
10 world, supporting several species of rare native prai-
11 rie grasses;

12 (3) portions of the Loess Hills remain undevel-
13 oped and provide an important opportunity to pro-
14 tect and preserve an historic, rare and unique nat-
15 ural resource;

16 (4) a program to study the Loess Hills can only
17 be successfully implemented with the cooperation
18 and participation of affected local governments and
19 landowners;

20 (5) in 1986, the Loess Hills area was des-
21 ignated as a National Natural Landmark in recogni-
22 tion of the area's nationally significant natural re-
23 sources;

24 (6) although significant natural resources re-
25 main in the area, increasing development in the area

1 has threatened the future stability and integrity of
2 the Loess Hills area; and

3 (7) the Loess Hills area merits further study by
4 the National Park Service, in cooperation with the
5 State of Iowa, local governments, and affected land-
6 owners, to determine appropriate means to better
7 protect, preserve, and interpret the significant re-
8 sources in the area.

9 (b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this Act is to author-
10 ize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a suitability
11 and feasibility study to determine what measures should
12 be taken to preserve the Loess Hills in western Iowa.

13 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

14 As used in this Act—

15 (1) the term “Loess Hills” means the natural
16 geological formation of soils in the State of Iowa lo-
17 cated between Waubansie State Park and Stone
18 Park, and which includes Plymouth, Woodbury,
19 Monona, Harrison, Pottawattamie, Mills, and Fre-
20 mont counties;

21 (2) the term “Secretary” means the Secretary
22 of the Interior; and

23 (3) the term “State” means the State of Iowa.

1 **SEC. 4. LOESS HILLS STUDY.**

2 (a) The Secretary shall undertake a study of the
3 Loess Hills area to review options for the protection and
4 interpretation of the area's natural, cultural, and histor-
5 ical resources. The study shall include, but need not be
6 limited to, an analysis of the suitability and feasibility of
7 designating the area as—

8 (1) a unit of the National Park System;

9 (2) a National Heritage Area or Heritage Cor-
10 ridor; or

11 (3) such other designation as may be appro-
12 priate.

13 (b) The study shall examine the appropriateness and
14 feasibility of cooperative protection and interpretive efforts
15 between the United States, the State, its political subdivi-
16 sions, and non-profit groups or other interested parties.

17 (c) The Secretary shall consult in the preparation of
18 the study with State and local governmental entities, af-
19 fected landowners, and other interested public and private
20 organizations and individuals.

21 (d) The study shall be completed within one year
22 after the date funds are made available. No later than 30
23 days after its completion, the Secretary shall transmit a
24 report of the study, along with any recommendations, to
25 the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the

1 United States Senate and the Committee on Resources of
2 the United States House of Representatives.

3 **SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

4 There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out
5 this Act not to exceed \$275,000.

Passed the Senate July 1, 1999.

Attest:

GARY SISCO,
Secretary.