

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2643

To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to provide assistance in implementing cultural heritage, conservation, and recreational activities in the Connecticut River watershed of the States of New Hampshire and Vermont.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 21, 2009

Mr. WELCH (for himself and Mr. HODES) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

A BILL

To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to provide assistance in implementing cultural heritage, conservation, and recreational activities in the Connecticut River watershed of the States of New Hampshire and Vermont.

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 “Upper Connecticut
5 River Partnership Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.**

7 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

1 (1) the upper Connecticut River watershed in
2 the States of New Hampshire and Vermont is a sce-
3 nic region of historic villages located in a working
4 landscape of farms, forests, and the mountainous
5 headwaters and broad fertile floodplains of New
6 England’s longest river, the Connecticut River;

7 (2) the River provides outstanding fish and
8 wildlife habitat, recreation, and hydropower genera-
9 tion for the New England region;

10 (3) the upper Connecticut River watershed has
11 been recognized by Congress as part of the Silvio O.
12 Conte National Fish and Wildlife Refuge, estab-
13 lished by the Silvio O. Conte National Fish and
14 Wildlife Refuge Act (16 U.S.C. 668dd note; Public
15 Law 102–212);

16 (4) the demonstrated commitment to steward-
17 ship of the River by the citizens living in the water-
18 shed led to the Presidential designation of the River
19 as 1 of 14 American Heritage Rivers on July 30,
20 1998;

21 (5) the River is home to the bi-State Con-
22 necticut River Scenic Byway, which was declared a
23 National Scenic Byway by the Department of Trans-
24 portation in 2005 to foster heritage tourism in the
25 region;

1 (6) each of the legislatures of the States of
2 Vermont and New Hampshire has established a
3 commission for the Connecticut River watershed,
4 and the 2 commissions, known collectively as the
5 “Connecticut River Joint Commissions”—

6 (A) have worked together since 1989; and

7 (B) serve as the focal point and catalyst
8 for cooperation between Federal agencies,
9 States, communities, and citizens;

10 (7) in 1997, as directed by the legislatures, the
11 Connecticut River Joint Commissions, with the sub-
12 stantial involvement of 5 bi-State local river sub-
13 committees appointed to represent riverfront towns,
14 produced the 6 volume Connecticut River Corridor
15 Management Plan, to be used as a blueprint in edu-
16 cating agencies, communities, and the public in how
17 to be good neighbors to a great river;

18 (8) in 2009, after 3 years of broad consultation,
19 the Connecticut River Joint Commissions have sub-
20 stantially expanded and published updates via the
21 Connecticut River Recreation Management Plan and
22 the Water Resources Management Plan to guide
23 public and private activities in the watershed;

24 (9) through a joint legislative resolution, the
25 legislatures of the States of Vermont and New

1 Hampshire have requested that Congress provide for
2 continuation of cooperative partnerships and that
3 Federal agencies support the Connecticut River
4 Joint Commissions in carrying out the recommenda-
5 tions of the Connecticut River Corridor Management
6 Plan;

7 (10) this Act effectuates certain recommenda-
8 tions of the Connecticut River Corridor Management
9 Plan that are most appropriately directed by the
10 States through the Connecticut River Joint Commis-
11 sions, with assistance from the National Park Serv-
12 ice and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service;
13 and

14 (11) where implementation of those rec-
15 ommendations involves partnership with local com-
16 munities and organizations, support for the partner-
17 ship should be provided by the Secretary.

18 (b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this Act is to author-
19 ize the Secretary to provide to the States of New Hamp-
20 shire and Vermont (including communities in those
21 States), through the Connecticut River Joint Commis-
22 sions, technical and financial assistance for management
23 of the River.

24 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

25 In this Act:

1 (1) RIVER.—The term “River” means the Con-
2 necticut River.

3 (2) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
4 the Secretary of the Interior.

5 (3) STATE.—The term “State” means—

6 (A) the State of New Hampshire; or

7 (B) the State of Vermont.

8 **SEC. 4. CONNECTICUT RIVER GRANTS AND TECHNICAL AS-**
9 **SISTANCE PROGRAM.**

10 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish a
11 Connecticut River Grants and Technical Assistance Pro-
12 gram to provide grants and technical assistance to State
13 and local governments, nonprofit organizations, and the
14 private sector to carry out projects for the conservation,
15 restoration, and interpretation of historic, cultural, rec-
16 reational, and natural resources in the upper Connecticut
17 River watershed.

18 (b) CRITERIA.—The Secretary, in consultation with
19 the Connecticut River Joint Commissions, shall develop
20 criteria for determining the eligibility of applicants for,
21 and reviewing and prioritizing applications for, grants or
22 technical assistance under the program.

23 (c) COST-SHARING.—

1 (1) FEDERAL SHARE.—The Federal share of
2 the cost of carrying out a grant project under sub-
3 section (a) shall not exceed 75 percent.

4 (2) NON-FEDERAL SHARE.—The non-Federal
5 share of the cost of a project may be provided in the
6 form of an in-kind contribution of services or mate-
7 rials.

8 **SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

9 There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out
10 this Act \$1,000,000 for each fiscal year.

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