

111TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 2951

To authorize funding to protect and conserve lands contiguous with the Blue Ridge Parkway to serve the public, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 26, 2010

Mr. BURR (for himself, Mrs. HAGAN, Mr. WARNER, and Mr. WEBB) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

A BILL

To authorize funding to protect and conserve lands contiguous with the Blue Ridge Parkway to serve the public, 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. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Blue Ridge Parkway
5 Protection Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

7 In this Act—

8 (1) DIRECTOR.—The term “Director” means
9 the Director of the National Park Service.

1 (2) PARKWAY.—The term “Parkway” means
2 the Blue Ridge Parkway.

3 (3) PLAN.—The term “Plan” means the Na-
4 tional Park Service’s Blue Ridge Parkway Land
5 Protection Plan.

6 (4) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
7 the Secretary of the Interior.

8 (5) SUPERINTENDENT.—The term “Super-
9 intendent” means the Superintendent of the Blue
10 Ridge Parkway.

11 **SEC. 3. FINDINGS.**

12 Congress finds that—

13 (1) it is in the national interest to preserve and
14 protect the Blue Ridge Parkway, the most visited
15 unit of the National Park System;

16 (2) the 75th anniversary of the Blue Ridge
17 Parkway is in September 2010;

18 (3) the Parkway, including 469 miles in North
19 Carolina and Virginia linking the Great Smoky
20 Mountains National Park to the Shenandoah Na-
21 tional Park, has nearly 19,000,000 visitors each
22 year and is vital to the economic well-being of com-
23 munities along the Parkway;

24 (4) the Parkway’s renowned scenic vistas are
25 threatened by encroaching development, and surveys

1 of visitors to the Parkway have found that fewer
2 people would frequent the Parkway if scenic views
3 are compromised;

4 (5) the protection and conservation of land
5 along the Parkway helps preserve farmland, intact
6 forests, wildlife habitat, and drinking water supplies
7 downstream; and

8 (6) in order to preserve the natural beauty, eco-
9 logical integrity, and cultural heritage of the Park-
10 way and to commemorate its 75th anniversary, it is
11 vital that certain lands contiguous to the Parkway
12 are conserved for the enjoyment of future genera-
13 tions.

14 **SEC. 4. LAND ACQUISITION.**

15 (a) ACQUISITION AUTHORITY.—The Secretary is au-
16 thorized to acquire land and interests in land from willing
17 sellers by donation, by purchase with donated or appro-
18 priated funds, or by exchange to protect up to 50,000
19 acres of land that are identified in the Plan or that meets
20 the Plan’s amendment criteria.

21 (b) ACQUISITION OF LAND.—Lands and interests in
22 lands to be acquired with funds made available under this
23 Act shall be—

24 (1) contiguous with the Parkway; and

1 (2) identified by the Superintendent as a pri-
2 ority for acquisition by the Federal Government.

3 (c) AVAILABILITY OF PLAN.—The Plan shall be on
4 file and available for public inspection in the appropriate
5 offices of the National Park Service.

6 (d) BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT.—Upon acquisition of
7 lands and interests in land under this Act, the Secretary
8 shall adjust the boundary of the Parkway to reflect the
9 acquisition.

10 (e) ADMINISTRATION.—Lands or interests in land ac-
11 quired for the Parkway shall be administered by the Sec-
12 retary, through the National Park Service, as part of the
13 Parkway in accordance with all applicable laws and regu-
14 lations.

15 **SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

16 (a) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be appro-
17 priated to the Secretary to carry out this Act \$15,000,000
18 for each of fiscal years 2011 through 2015. Unobligated
19 funding in each of these fiscal years shall be available until
20 expended.

21 (b) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—From the funds made
22 available under this Act, the Secretary may award grants
23 for the following:

24 (1) To acquire land and interests in lands.

1 (2) To provide technical expense assistance
2 (such as costs for title reports, recordable surveys,
3 hazardous material surveys, and appraisals, and
4 other costs normally associated with land acquisition) by entering into cooperative agreements with
5 qualified non-profit conservation organizations for
6 acquiring lands or interests in lands from willing
7 sellers that have been specifically identified by the
8 Superintendent as a priority.

10 (c) SITE RESTORATION AND SURVEYS.—The Secretary is authorized to expend not more than 10 percent
11 of funds made available under this section in any fiscal
12 year for site restoration and for resource surveys.

14 (d) REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES FOR QUALIFIED
15 NON-PROFIT CONSERVATION ORGANIZATIONS.—From
16 funds made available under this Act, not more than
17 \$250,000 may be used in each of fiscal years 2011
18 through 2015 for the reimbursement of administrative expenses for qualified non-profit conservation organizations
19 involved directly in land acquisition projects in which lands
20 and interests in lands are conveyed to the Parkway. Such
21 funds shall be disbursed according to cooperative agreement arrangements established with qualified non-profit
22 conservation organizations for the purpose of acquiring
23 conservation organizations for the purpose of acquiring
24

1 lands or interests in lands for the protection of the Park-
2 way and shall remain available until expended.

3 **SEC. 6. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.**

4 For each fiscal year that funds are made available
5 under this Act, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a
6 report that includes—

7 (1) a description of the condition of the Park-
8 way, including threats and land preservation needs;

9 (2) a list of land acquisitions that have been
10 completed or are underway under this Act; and

11 (3) a list of priority land acquisitions that
12 should be made to accomplish the purpose of this
13 Act, notwithstanding the addition of other priority
14 lands that become available throughout the year.

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