

113TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 2857

To direct the Secretary of the Interior to carry out a study regarding the suitability and feasibility of establishing the Naugatuck River Valley National Heritage Area in Connecticut, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 18, 2014

Mr. BLUMENTHAL (for himself and Mr. MURPHY) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of the Interior to carry out a study regarding the suitability and feasibility of establishing the Naugatuck River Valley National Heritage Area in Connecticut, 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 “Naugatuck River Val-
5 ley National Heritage Area Study Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE STUDY REGARDING**
7 **NAUGATUCK RIVER VALLEY, CONNECTICUT.**

8 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

1 (1) The area that encompasses the Naugatuck
2 River Valley of Connecticut has made a unique con-
3 tribution to the cultural, political, and industrial de-
4 velopment of the United States.

5 (2) The Naugatuck River Valley is comprised of
6 14 communities along the Naugatuck River, which
7 stretches for more than 40 miles from its head-
8 waters in Torrington, Connecticut, to the confluence
9 with the Housatonic River in Shelton. The 14 mu-
10 nicipalities of Torrington, Harwinton, Litchfield,
11 Plymouth/Terryville, Thomaston, Waterbury, Water-
12 town, Ansonia, Beacon Falls, Derby, Naugatuck,
13 Oxford, Seymour, and Shelton, share common his-
14 torical elements, agricultural, trade, and maritime
15 origins, similar architecture, common industries, an
16 immigrant culture succeeding colonial beginnings,
17 and a significant contribution to the war effort from
18 the Revolutionary War to World War II. Most of
19 these elements are still in evidence today.

20 (3) Three major industries drove the manufac-
21 turing contribution of the Valley. As evidenced in
22 the book, *The Brass Industry in the United States*,
23 by William Lathrop, the brass industry was born in
24 Connecticut's Naugatuck River Valley and harnessed
25 the power of the Naugatuck River and the skilled

1 immigrant workers who arrived from Germany, Ire-
2 land, Italy, and Poland.

3 (4) The Naugatuck River Valley also spawned
4 the birth of the rubber industry in the United States
5 when Charles Goodyear developed the vulcanization
6 process in 1839. Together with Samuel Lewis, a
7 wealthy industrialist from Naugatuck, Connecticut,
8 Goodyear parlayed his innovation into establishing
9 the U.S. Rubber Company, making Naugatuck the
10 rubber capital of the world.

11 (5) The Naugatuck River Valley was also a
12 major contributor to the success of the United
13 States clock industry. Eli Terry designed inter-
14 changeable parts for his clocks assembled in
15 Terryville. Renowned clockmaker Seth Thomas
16 began making the first of millions of clocks in
17 Thomaston, Connecticut, in 1813. His company con-
18 tinued until 1931 when it became a division of Gen-
19 eral Time Corporation (Timex). Other important in-
20 dustries included pens, evaporated milk, pianos and
21 organs, corset stays, and cables.

22 (6) The Naugatuck River Valley has been a
23 major contributor to the United States war efforts
24 from the American Revolution to the Civil War to
25 World War II. In the 2007 PBS film “The War”,

1 the story of World War II directed and produced by
 2 Ken Burns and Lynn Novick, the City of Water-
 3 bury, Connecticut, was characterized as the “arse-
 4 nal” of the war effort because of its high concentra-
 5 tion of war industries.

6 (7) The Naugatuck River Valley has been home
 7 to many great authors, diplomats, inventors and pa-
 8 triots, such as David Humphreys, Aide-de-Camp to
 9 General George Washington and the first American
 10 ambassador; Commodore Isaac Hull, Commander of
 11 “Old Ironsides” during the War of 1812; Ebenezer
 12 D. Bassett, the country’s first black ambassador;
 13 Dr. John Howe, inventor of a pin making machine
 14 that made the common pin a household necessity;
 15 and Pierre Lallement, inventor of the modern two-
 16 wheel bicycle.

17 (8) The Naugatuck River Valley possesses a
 18 rich and diverse assemblage of architecturally sig-
 19 nificant civic, industrial and residential structures
 20 and monuments dating from Colonial times to the
 21 present. There are 88 structures in the Naugatuck
 22 Valley included on the National Register of Historic
 23 Places. The first law school in America was built in
 24 Litchfield. Notable examples of the variety of archi-
 25 tecture found in the Valley include Robert Wakeman

1 Hill's brilliantly designed Thomaston Opera House
 2 and Town Hall; H.E. Ficken's acoustically impres-
 3 sive Sterling Opera House in Derby, site of appear-
 4 ances by many nationally known performers; Water-
 5 bury's Clock Tower, designed by the renowned archi-
 6 tectural firm of McKim, Mead & White which also
 7 designed four buildings in Naugatuck; Henry Bacon,
 8 designer of the Lincoln Memorial and two structures
 9 in Naugatuck; and the Father McGivney Statue cast
 10 by Joseph Coletti of Boston to honor the
 11 Waterburian who founded the Knights of Columbus.

12 (9) The Naugatuck River Valley has been a
 13 melting pot for immigrant populations who have
 14 made significant contributions to the industrial, cul-
 15 tural, and economic development of the nation.

16 (10) The Naugatuck River Valley possesses a
 17 group of public-spirited citizens dedicated to the
 18 preservation and promotion of the region's natural,
 19 historic, and cultural heritage, and a passionate re-
 20 solve to work together for the betterment of the Val-
 21 ley and its residents.

22 (b) STUDY.—

23 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Inte-
 24 rior shall, in consultation with the State of Con-
 25 necticut and appropriate organizations, carry out a

1 study regarding the suitability and feasibility of es-
2 tablishing the Naugatuck River Valley National Her-
3 itage Area in Connecticut.

4 (2) CONTENTS.—The study shall include anal-
5 ysis and documentation regarding whether the Study
6 Area—

7 (A) has an assemblage of natural, historic,
8 and cultural resources that together represent
9 distinctive aspects of American heritage worthy
10 of recognition, conservation, interpretation, and
11 continuing use, and are best managed through
12 partnerships among public and private entities
13 and by combining diverse and sometimes non-
14 contiguous resources and active communities;

15 (B) reflects traditions, customs, beliefs,
16 and folklife that are a valuable part of the na-
17 tional story;

18 (C) provides outstanding opportunities to
19 conserve natural, historic, cultural, or scenic
20 features;

21 (D) provides outstanding recreational and
22 educational opportunities;

23 (E) contains resources important to the
24 identified theme or themes of the Study Area

1 that retain a degree of integrity capable of sup-
2 porting interpretation;

3 (F) includes residents, business interests,
4 nonprofit organizations, and local and State
5 governments that are involved in the planning,
6 have developed a conceptual financial plan that
7 outlines the roles for all participants, including
8 the Federal Government, and have dem-
9 onstrated support for the concept of a national
10 heritage area;

11 (G) has a potential management entity to
12 work in partnership with residents, business in-
13 terests, nonprofit organizations, and local and
14 State governments to develop a national herit-
15 age area consistent with continued local and
16 State economic activity; and

17 (H) has a conceptual boundary map that is
18 supported by the public.

19 (c) BOUNDARIES OF THE STUDY AREA.—The Study
20 Area shall be comprised of sites in Torrington, Harwinton,
21 Litchfield, Plymouth/Terryville, Thomaston, Waterbury,
22 Watertown, Ansonia, Beacon Falls, Derby, Naugatuck,
23 Oxford, Seymour, and Shelton, Connecticut.

24 (d) SUBMISSION OF STUDY RESULTS.—Not later
25 than 3 years after funds are first made available for this

- 1 section, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on
- 2 Natural Resources of the House of Representatives and
- 3 the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the
- 4 Senate a report describing the results of the study.

