

114TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 6291

To retitle Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore as Indiana Dunes National Park, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 28, 2016

Mr. VISCLOSKY (for himself, Mrs. WALORSKI, Mr. STUTZMAN, Mr. ROKITA, Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana, Mr. MESSER, Mr. CARSON of Indiana, Mr. BUCSHON, and Mr. YOUNG of Indiana) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

A BILL

To retitle Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore as Indiana Dunes National Park, 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 “The Indiana Dunes
5 National Park Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 The Congress makes the following findings:

8 (1) The Great Lakes form the largest fresh-
9 water system on Earth. Lake Michigan, by volume,

1 is the second largest Great Lake and the only Great
2 Lake located wholly within the United States.

3 (2) The southern shore of Lake Michigan in-
4 cludes some of the most geologically and biologically
5 diverse areas in the United States.

6 (3) The unique features that comprise the
7 southern shore of the Lake Michigan, also known as
8 the Indiana Dunes, were formed over the course of
9 12,000 years by natural forces, including glaciers,
10 wind, and water. Glacial melting and fluctuations in
11 the water level resulted in the formation of as many
12 as 7 shorelines. This process resulted in the bio-
13 logically diverse beaches, sand dunes, and inter-dune
14 wetlands that can be seen today.

15 (4) Native American peoples inhabited the Indi-
16 ana Dunes region for over 10,000 years, including
17 the Miami and Potawatomi Indian tribes.

18 (5) Local conservation efforts to preserve the
19 Indiana Dunes began as early as 1899 when Henry
20 Cowles, a botanist from the University of Chicago
21 who is known for being one of the founders of con-
22 temporary ecological study and thought, published
23 an article entitled “Ecological Relations of the Vege-
24 tation on Sand Dunes of Lake Michigan” in the Bo-

1 tanical Gazette, bringing international attention to
2 the intricate ecosystems existing on the dunes.

3 (6) On October 30, 1916, one month after the
4 establishment of the National Park Service, Stephen
5 Mather, the first Director of the National Park
6 Service, held hearings in Chicago, Illinois, to gauge
7 public sentiment on a “Sand Dunes National Park,”
8 which would have established much of the southern
9 shore of Lake Michigan as one of the United States
10 first national parks.

11 (7) Four hundred people attended this hearing
12 and 42 people, including Henry Cowles, spoke in
13 favor of the park proposal. There were no oppo-
14 nents. However, plans for a “Sand Dunes National
15 Park” were delayed because the United States en-
16 tered World War I and national focus shifted away
17 from national parks to national defense.

18 (8) Local conservation efforts to preserve the
19 Indiana Dunes persisted after World War I and cul-
20 minated in the establishment of the Indiana Dunes
21 State Park in 1925 and the Indiana Dunes National
22 Lakeshore in 1966, established by Public Law 89–
23 761.

1 (9) The Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore was
2 subsequently expanded in 1976, 1980, 1986, and
3 1992.

4 (10) The Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore
5 and the adjacent Indiana Dunes State Park are
6 comprised of over 15,000 acres of dunes, oak savan-
7 nas, swamps, bogs, marshes, prairies, rivers, and
8 forests that are currently preserved for public enjoy-
9 ment. This includes 15 miles of Lake Michigan
10 shoreline, spanning the distance from Gary, Indiana,
11 to Michigan City, Indiana.

12 (11) The Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore is
13 one of the most biologically diverse National Park
14 Service units, containing 2,336 unique species, in-
15 cluding 896 animal species and 1,407 plant species.

16 (12) The Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore is
17 a cherished cultural landmark, attracting millions of
18 visitors each year.

19 (13) The Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore is
20 an especially important feeding and resting area for
21 migrating land and water birds, boasting 350 unique
22 species.

23 (14) Institutions such as the Dunes Learning
24 Center attract youth and other community members
25 to the Lakeshore and provide them with insight on

1 the biodiversity and historical significance of the In-
2 diana Dunes.

3 **SEC. 3. INDIANA DUNES NATIONAL LAKESHORE RETITLED**
4 **AS INDIANA DUNES NATIONAL PARK.**

5 (a) IN GENERAL.—Public Law 89–761 (16 U.S.C.
6 460u et seq.) is amended—

7 (1) by striking “National Lakeshore” each
8 place it appears and inserting “National Park”; and

9 (2) by striking “lakeshore” each place it ap-
10 pears and inserting “Park”.

11 (b) NONAPPLICATION.—The amendment made by
12 subsection (a)(1) shall not apply to the title of the map
13 referred to in the first section of Public Law 89–761 (16
14 U.S.C. 460u).

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