

GREAT DISMAL SWAMP NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA ACT

JULY 26, 2021.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. GRIJALVA, from the Committee on Natural Resources,
submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany H.R. 1154]

The Committee on Natural Resources, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 1154) to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to assess the suitability and feasibility of designating certain land as the Great Dismal Swamp National Heritage Area, and for other purposes, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon without amendment and recommends that the bill do pass.

PURPOSE OF THE BILL

The purpose of H.R. 1154 is to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to assess the suitability and feasibility of designating certain land as the Great Dismal Swamp National Heritage Area.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

H.R. 1154 directs the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study assessing the suitability and feasibility of designating the Great Dismal Swamp and its associated sites in the states of Virginia and North Carolina as a National Heritage Area. The study area includes the cities of Chesapeake, Norfolk, Portsmouth, and Suffolk, and the Isle of Wight County in the State of Virginia; and Camden, Currituck, Gates, and Pasquotank counties in the State of North Carolina.

The Great Dismal Swamp, a National Wildlife Refuge, spans across Virginia and North Carolina and contains the largest intact remnant of a vast forest that once covered more than one million acres. This cultural and ecological landscape is also home to the ancestral lands of the Nansemond Indian Nation and the historic lands of the Haliwa-Saponi and Meherrin Tribes; the largest

known collection of archaeological artifacts from maroon colonies; one of the only known water-based stops on the Underground Railroad to freedom; and a thriving community descending from early colonial Free People of Color whose families resisted American slavery, finding refuge within the Swamp.

Designating the Great Dismal Swamp as a National Heritage Area will ensure that the often untold stories of some of our nation's underrepresented communities—from the Indigenous communities who first called the Swamp home to the enslaved African Americans who endured the Swamp's hardships in their fight for freedom—are preserved and shared for current and future generations.

COMMITTEE ACTION

H.R. 1154 was introduced on February 18, 2021, by Representative A. Donald McEachin (D–VA). The bill was referred solely to the Committee on Natural Resources, and within the Committee to the Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands. On June 15, 2021, the Subcommittee held a hearing on the bill. On July 14, 2021, the Natural Resources Committee met to consider the bill. The Subcommittee was discharged by unanimous consent. No amendments were offered. The bill was adopted and ordered favorably reported to the House of Representatives by unanimous consent.

On February 26, 2021, the House passed H.R. 803, the Protecting America's Wilderness and Public Lands Act, which included the text of H.R. 1154.¹

HEARINGS

For the purposes of clause 3(c)(6) of House rule XIII, the following hearing was used to develop or consider this measure: hearing by the Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands held on June 15, 2021.

COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Regarding clause 2(b)(1) of rule X and clause 3(c)(1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee on Natural Resources' oversight findings and recommendations are reflected in the body of this report.

COMPLIANCE WITH HOUSE RULE XIII AND CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET ACT

1. *Cost of Legislation and the Congressional Budget Act.* With respect to the requirements of clause 3(c)(2) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives and section 308(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 and with respect to requirements of clause (3)(c)(3) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives and section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the Committee has requested but not received a cost estimate for this bill from the Director of Congressional Budget Office. The Committee adopts as its own cost estimate the forthcoming cost estimate of the Director of the Congressional Budget Office, should

¹H.R. 803, 117th Cong., tit. XVI (2021) (engrossed in House), <https://www.congress.gov/117/bills/hr803/BILLS-117hr803eh.pdf>.

such cost estimate be made available before House passage of the bill.

The Committee has requested but not received from the Director of the Congressional Budget Office a statement as to whether this bill contains any new budget authority, spending authority, credit authority, or an increase or decrease in revenues or tax expenditures.

Congressional Budget Office staff have informed the Committee on a preliminary, informal, nonbinding basis that the bill likely would not affect direct spending or revenues.

2. *General Performance Goals and Objectives.* As required by clause 3(c)(4) of rule XIII, the general performance goals and objectives of this bill are to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to assess the suitability and feasibility of designating certain land as the Great Dismal Swamp National Heritage Area.

EARMARK STATEMENT

This bill does not contain any Congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined under clause 9(e), 9(f), and 9(g) of rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives.

UNFUNDED MANDATES REFORM ACT STATEMENT

An estimate of Federal mandates prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office pursuant to section 423 of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act was not made available to the Committee in time for the filing of this report. The Chair of the Committee shall cause such estimate to be printed in the *Congressional Record* upon its receipt by the Committee.

EXISTING PROGRAMS

This bill does not establish or reauthorize a program of the federal government known to be duplicative of another program.

APPLICABILITY TO LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

The Committee finds that the legislation does not relate to the terms and conditions of employment or access to public services or accommodations within the meaning of section 102(b)(3) of the Congressional Accountability Act.

PREEMPTION OF STATE, LOCAL, OR TRIBAL LAW

Any preemptive effect of this bill over state, local, or tribal law is intended to be consistent with the bill's purposes and text and the Supremacy Clause of Article VI of the U.S. Constitution.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

If enacted, this bill would make no changes to existing law.

SUPPLEMENTAL, MINORITY, ADDITIONAL, OR DISSENTING VIEWS

None.