

BUFFALO BAYOU NATIONAL  
HERITAGE AREA STUDY ACT

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1776) to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to study the suitability and feasibility of establishing the Buffalo Bayou National Heritage Area in west Houston, Texas, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. R. 1776

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

**SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

This Act may be cited as the "Buffalo Bayou National Heritage Area Study Act".

**SEC. 2. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE STUDY REGARDING BUFFALO BAYOU, TEXAS.**

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

(1) The area beginning at Shepherd Drive in west Houston, Texas, and extending to the Turning Basin, commonly referred to as the "Buffalo Bayou", made a unique contribution to the cultural, political, and industrial development of the United States.

(2) The Buffalo Bayou is distinctive as the first spine of modern industrial development in Texas and one of the first along the Gulf of Mexico coast.

(3) The Buffalo Bayou played a significant role in the struggle for Texas independence.

(4) The Buffalo Bayou developed a prosperous and productive shipping industry that survives today.

(5) The Buffalo Bayou led in the development of Texas' petrochemical industry that made Houston the center of the early oil boom in America.

(6) The Buffalo Bayou developed a sophisticated shipping system, leading to the formation of the modern day Houston Ship Channel.

(7) The Buffalo Bayou developed a significant industrial base, and served as the focal point for the new city of Houston.

(8) There is a longstanding commitment by the Buffalo Bayou Partnership, Inc., to complete the Buffalo Bayou Trail along the 12-mile segment of the Buffalo Bayou.

(9) There is a need for assistance for the preservation and promotion of the significance of the Buffalo Bayou as a system for transportation, industry, commerce, and immigration.

(10) The Department of the Interior is responsible for protecting the Nation's cultural and historical resources. There are significant examples of such resources within the Buffalo Bayou region to merit the involvement of the Federal Government in the development of programs and projects, in cooperation with the Buffalo Bayou Partnership, Inc., the State of Texas, and other local and governmental entities, to adequately conserve, protect, and interpret this heritage for future generations, while providing opportunities for education and revitalization.

(b) STUDY.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall, in consultation with the State of Texas, the City of Houston, and other appropriate organizations, carry out a study regarding the suitability and feasibility of establishing the Buffalo Bayou National Heritage Area in Houston, Texas.

(2) CONTENTS.—The study shall include analysis and documentation regarding whether the Study Area—

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

(B) reflects traditions, customs, beliefs, and folklore that are a valuable part of the national story;

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

(D) provides outstanding recreational and educational opportunities;

(E) contains resources important to the identified theme or themes of the Study Area that retain a degree of integrity capable of supporting interpretation;

(F) includes residents, business interests, nonprofit organizations, and local and State governments that are involved in the planning, have developed a conceptual financial plan that outlines the roles for all participants, including the Federal Government, and have demonstrated support for the concept of a national heritage area;

(G) has a potential management entity to work in partnership with residents, business interests, nonprofit organizations, and local and State governments to develop a national heritage area consistent with continued local and State economic activity; and

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

(c) BOUNDARIES OF THE STUDY AREA.—The Study Area shall be comprised of sites in Houston, Texas, in an area roughly bounded by Shepherd Drive and extending to the Turning Basin, commonly referred to as the "Buffalo Bayou".

(d) SUBMISSION OF STUDY RESULTS.—Not later than 3 years after funds are first made available for this section, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Resources of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate a report describing the results of the study.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN) and the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN).

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

H.R. 1776, introduced by my friend the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN), authorizes the Secretary of Interior to complete a study on the suitability and feasibility of establishing the Buffalo Bayou National Heritage Site in Houston, Texas. The designation would highlight the cultural, historic, political and economic significance that Buffalo Bayou played in the formation of modern day Houston.

The Buffalo Bayou, nicknamed the "Highway of the Republic," played an important role in the history and development of the City of Houston and the State of Texas, particularly as an immigration and navigation route beginning in the 1820s. It was the most reliable route for navigation into the interior of Texas, which eventually led to the Houston Ship Channel. In addition, a multitude of historic sites, early ethnic neighborhoods, several segments of the Great Coastal Texas Birding Trail, and some of Houston's oldest park areas line the banks of the Buffalo Bayou.

Madam Speaker, this bill was amended at the subcommittee proceedings which specified criteria the Secretary

shall consider in the development of the study, removed the appropriations authorization, and added the standard 3-year time limit for completing the study. The bill now has been agreed to by the minority and the administration. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 1776, as amended.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, H.R. 1776 would authorize a study of an area in Houston, Texas known as Buffalo Bayou to determine whether it would be suitable and feasible to designate it as a National Heritage Area. The study would be governed by well-established criteria for making such determinations and the results would be presented back to the relevant committees in the House and Senate. Finally, the bill authorizes funding to complete the study.

Madam Speaker, the Buffalo Bayou is an important waterway both economically and historically. According to the findings in the legislation, the area played a significant role in the fight for Texas' independence as well as in the development of the petrochemical industry in Texas and in the Nation as a whole. Given this history, the area certainly sounds promising, but only a formal study can determine if Buffalo Bayou retains the kinds of resources required for addition to our National Park System.

We commend the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN) on his hard work on this legislation and look forward to the results of this important study.

Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN).

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Madam Speaker, as the author of this legislation, I would like to thank my colleague the gentlewoman from the Virgin Islands (Mrs. CHRISTENSEN), also the gentleman from Utah (Mr. HANSEN), also former chairman of the subcommittee the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. HEFLEY) and also the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL) and the staff of the Committee on Resources for their great work on this bill.

H.R. 1776, the Buffalo Bayou National Heritage Area Study Act, begins a process of helping the people of Houston and east Harris County recognize the cultural significance of our community. The Buffalo Bayou waterway was the starting point for what is now the City of Houston.

The Allen brothers, Houston's original founders, first came through this stretch of water on their way to a new settlement that would eventually become Houston, Texas. As Houston grew, Buffalo Bayou grew with it as the heart of the early Gulf Coast industrial complex. The legislation being considered before us today authorizes the National Park Service to study whether this waterway should be designated as a National Heritage Area.

Although the National Park Service feasibility study does not in itself mark Buffalo Bayou as a National Heritage Area, it is the first step in that process.

As a lifetime Houston resident, I believe that designating Buffalo Bayou as a National Heritage Area would further the redevelopment of the community by bringing more Federal resources to our area. Such a designation would highlight the historic significance of this waterway and the surrounding community.

Buffalo Bayou is the original industrial spine of Houston and was the building block for what is now the Port of Houston, the Nation's second largest port. In addition, the numerous historic sites and events which have taken place in and around Buffalo Bayou makes this waterway a perfect candidate for a National Heritage Area designation.

All these facts will be borne out as the National Park Service begins to contact our local sponsor, the Buffalo Bayou Partnership. Anne Olson, Executive Director of the Buffalo Bayou Partnership, brings tremendous organizational and fund-raising abilities to this effort, and I will continue to work closely with her organization to incorporate this designation into the overall master plan for east Harris County. It is the strong public-private partnership already in place that will help gain a positive recommendation from the National Park Service on our designation request.

I believe local support is vital for making a National Heritage Area work. Madam Speaker, I am working in close collaboration with our local elected officials to map out an action plan that will provide maximum local flexibility in determining how our local history will be told if we receive such a National Heritage Area. This legislation has the strong support of both our Harris County Judge Robert Eckles and our Houston Mayor Lee Brown, both of whom recognize that our community has a historic story to tell our visitors. Their help has been invaluable. I would like to thank them for their assistance in this endeavor.

Madam Speaker, I again thank the committee and the staff for their efforts.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1776, The "Buffalo Bayou National Heritage Area Study Act." This legislation is a welcome recognition of the historical background of my fair city, Houston, TX, and an opportunity to expand the rich cultural landscape of the American Southwest.

The Buffalo Bayou area in Texas helped to establish an economic foothold for settlers of the gulf coast region. Without this early industry, which included both shipping and refining petroleum, the Buffalo Bayou area might not have developed into the thriving metropolis it has become.

Madam Speaker, though the factual importance of Buffalo Bayou is clear, its significance to the socioeconomic landscape at place in

America is not as fully known. This legislation will remedy that situation by authorizing the Department of the Interior to study the feasibility of establishing the Buffalo Bayou National Heritage Area in Houston. Passage of this legislation will allow this agency to analyze and document the area's natural, historic, and cultural resources. As I am confident that such a studies will lead to a full recognition of the wealth of Americana associated with what we now know as Houston, TX.

Madam Speaker, many Americans are unaware that many of this nation's most significant events have taken place in Texas. For example, Juneteenth, which is recognized by several States as the official holiday of Black emancipation, is based on events that took place in Texas. H.R. 1776 will help to discover and publicize other significant places and events in the development of our nation and way of life. By cooperating with local residents, public and private concerns, all relevant parties will be given an opportunity to work together to shape the collective memory of this historical treasure.

H.R. 1776 is an excellent example of the effective use Interior Department funds, and I encourage all Members to support this legislation.

Mr. BENTSEN. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 1776, which authorizes a National Park Service study of a Buffalo Bayou National Heritage Area in Houston, Texas. I applaud our colleague Congressman GENE GREEN for introducing it. The City of Houston was founded on the banks of Buffalo Bayou by the Allen brothers and there Houston's future as a world shipping center was born. With the help of the U.S. Congress and the determination of early local leaders like Congressman Joseph C. Hutcheson, Congressman Thomas Henry Ball, and Mayor H. Baldwin Rice, the Houston Ship Channel was born out of the mouth of Buffalo Bayou.

Although Houston has achieved great prominence in maritime trade, Buffalo Bayou has means more to Houston than just commerce. Buffalo Bayou retains a great scenic beauty as it flows across Harris County through Memorial Park and Downtown to the San Jacinto River and has the potential to provide a great deal more scenic, open space, and historic community value.

This legislation will allow the National Park Service to investigate the potential for a Buffalo Bayou national heritage area. I congratulate my colleague and friend GENE GREEN for his hard work on the bill, and I believe the Park Service will find the Buffalo Bayou a unique historic cultural area deserving of financial and planning assistance for historic preservation, revitalization, and beautification efforts. If the Park Service and Congress both approve the Buffalo Bayou Heritage Area, Houston communities will have access to \$10 million in improvement funds along with Park Service planning expertise. Today is the first step towards obtaining a Park Service commitment to enhancing the birthplace of Houston, our Nation's fourth largest city.

Mr. WALDEN of Oregon. Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by

the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1776, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### EXPRESSING PROFOUND SORROW OF THE CONGRESS FOR DEATH AND INJURIES SUFFERED BY FIRST RESPONDERS IN AFTERMATH OF TERRORIST ATTACKS ON SEPTEMBER 11, 2001

Mr. LATOURETTE. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 233) expressing the profound sorrow of the Congress for the death and injuries suffered by first responders as they endeavored to save innocent people in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 233

Whereas law enforcement officers, firefighters, and emergency medical personnel are collectively known as first responders;

Whereas following the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, first responders reacted immediately in evacuating and rescuing innocent people from the buildings;

Whereas first responders also arrived quickly at the crash site of United Airlines flight 93 in southwestern Pennsylvania;

Whereas if it were not for the heroic efforts of first responders immediately after the terrorist attacks, numerous additional casualties would have resulted from the attacks;

Whereas as the first emergency personnel to arrive at the scenes of the terrorist attacks, first responders risked their lives in their efforts to save others;

Whereas while first responders were bravely conducting the evacuation and rescue after the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center, the two towers of that complex collapsed, and many first responders themselves became victims of the attack;

Whereas the everyday well-being, security, and safety of Americans depend upon the official duties of first responders;

Whereas in addition to their official duties, first responders around the Nation participate in planning, training, and exercises to respond to terrorist attacks;

Whereas emergency managers, public health officials, and medical care providers also invest significant time in planning, training, and exercises to better respond to terrorist attacks in the United States;

Whereas the Nation has not forgotten the heroic efforts of first responders after the bombing of the World Trade Center on February 26, 1993, and the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, on April 19, 1995;

Whereas there are numerous Federal programs that help prepare first responders from across the Nation, including the Domestic Preparedness Program and other training and exercise programs administered by the Department of Justice;

Whereas there are also domestic preparedness programs administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which together with the programs of the Department