

Calendar No. 666

106TH CONGRESS }
2d Session }

SENATE

{ REPORT
106-332

NATCHEZ TRACE PARKWAY, MISSISSIPPI

JULY 10, 2000.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. MURKOWSKI, from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany S. 2020]

The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, to which was referred the bill (S. 2020) to adjust the boundary of the Natchez Trace Parkway, Mississippi, and for other purposes, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon without amendment and recommends that the bill do pass.

PURPOSE OF THE MEASURE

The purpose of S. 2020 is to adjust the boundary of the Natchez Trace Parkway in Mississippi to include specified additional lands totaling 230 acres, and to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to lease certain land within the boundary of the Parkway to the city of Natchez, Mississippi, for any purpose compatible with the Parkway.

BACKGROUND AND NEED

During the late 18th and 19th centuries, the historic Natchez Trace was the principal overland link between the old Southwest Territory on the lower Mississippi River and the United States. The trace was a primitive network of trails that stretched from Natchez, Mississippi, to Nashville, Tennessee. The Natchez Trace Parkway was established as a unit of the National Park System in 1938 to commemorate the Natchez Trace.

Two segments of the Parkway remain unfinished, including the southern terminus near Natchez, Mississippi. In 1998, the National Park Service (NPS) released the Final Environmental Impact Statement for completion of the southern terminus, and selected a development alternative that will require the NPS to acquire approximately 150 acres of land to provide a corridor for approxi-

mately 4 miles of new roadway and an interchange in the city of Natchez.

In addition, the Parkway's General Management Plan (GMP) includes the Emerald Mound Development Concept Plan (DCP). The Emerald Mound is a prehistoric Natchez Indian ceremonial mound covering nearly eight acres. The property lines for the site are not contiguous with the present parkway boundary, and access is via a narrow, winding county road with hazardous intersections. The Parkway's GMP/DCP calls for the acquisition of 60–80 acres of private land to accommodate construction of a short spur road directly from the Parkway motor road to the mound site, an enlarged parking area, a wayside shelter with interpretive exhibits, and a new trail.

S. 2020 addresses both land acquisition issues by authorizing the acquisition of 150 acres to provide for the Parkway's southern terminus, and 80 acres near the Emerald Mound. In addition, S. 2020 authorizes the Secretary to lease land within the boundary of the Parkway to the city of Natchez for any purpose compatible with the Parkway. The latter provision stems from a parcel of land which was donated to the Parkway by the State of Mississippi, based on the assumption that it would be needed for the Parkway's southern terminus. Because a different alignment will be used for the terminus, the land is not needed for that purpose. The city of Natchez, however, desires use of the land for recreational purposes.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

S. 2020 was introduced by Senators Cochran and Lott on February 1, 2000. The Subcommittee on National Parks, Historic Preservation, and Recreation held a hearing on S. 2020 on May 11, 2000. At its business meeting on June 7, 2000, the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources ordered S. 2020 favorably reported.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION AND TABULATION OF VOTES

The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, in open business session on June 7, 2000, by a unanimous vote of a quorum present, recommends that the Senate pass S. 2020.

SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

Section 1 provides definitions for terms used in the bill.

Section 2 directs the Secretary of the Interior (Secretary) to adjust the boundary of the Natchez Trace Parkway (Parkway) by adding 230 acres of land depicted on specified maps. The Secretary is authorized to acquire the land through donation, purchase with donated or appropriated funds, or exchange, and to administer the lands as part of the Parkway.

Section 3 authorizes the Secretary to lease land within the boundary of the Parkway to the City of Natchez, Mississippi, for any purpose compatible with the Parkway.

Section 4 authorizes the appropriation of such sums as are necessary to carry out the Act.

COST AND BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS

The following estimate of the cost of this measure has been provided by the Congressional Budget Office:

U.S. CONGRESS,
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,
Washington, DC, June 26, 2000.

Hon. FRANK H. MURKOWSKI,
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Natural Resources,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has prepared the enclosed cost estimate for S. 2020, a bill to adjust the boundary of the Natchez Trace Parkway, Mississippi, and for other purposes.

If you wish further details on this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them. The CBO staff contacts for this estimate are James O’Keeffe (for federal costs), and Victoria Heid Hall (for the state and local impact).

Sincerely,

BARRY B. ANDERSON
(For Dan L. Crippen, Director).

Enclosure.

S. 2020—A bill to adjust the boundary of the Natchez Trace Parkway, Mississippi, and for other purposes

S. 2020 would expand the Natchez Trace Parkway in Mississippi to include a 150-acre plot and an 80-acre plot, which are currently both privately owned. The bill would authorize the Department of the Interior (DOI) to acquire those pieces of property by donation, purchase, or exchange. Finally, under the bill, land within the parkway boundary could be leased to the city of Natchez. CBO estimates that acquiring this property would have no significant impact on the federal budget, but this acquisition would be necessary to complete construction of the Natchez Trace Parkway.

Based on information from DOI, CBO expects that the 150-acre piece of land would be purchased by the state of Mississippi and donated to the United States. There has been no formal appraisal of the land, but based on information from DOI, CBO estimates that purchasing the 80-acre plot would cost about \$500,000.

DOI and the city of Natchez have not agreed on the terms of a possible lease for a portion to the parkway, but DOI expects that it would charge only a nominal amount. Any money collected from a lease would be recorded as offsetting receipts—a credit against direct spending. Because S. 2020 would affect direct spending, pay-as-you-go procedures would apply; but based on information from DOI, CBO expects that any receipts collected under the bill would be less than \$5,000 annually.

Expanding the boundaries of this parkway could enable the Department of Transportation’s (DOT’s) Federal Lands Highways Program to construct an access road and the southern terminus of the Natchez Trace Parkway. Based on information from DOT, CBO estimates this construction would cost about \$25 million over the 2003–2005 period, assuming appropriation of the necessary amounts. Spending for the Federal Lands Highways Program is authorized under current law.

S. 2020 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would have no significant impact on the budgets of state, local, or tribal

governments. Enacting the bill would benefit the city of Natchez, Mississippi, by allowing it to lease a portion of the parkway. Any nonfederal land acquired by the National Park Service under this bill would only be acquired if agreeable to the state or local jurisdictions.

The CBO staff contacts for this estimate are James O'Keeffe (for federal costs), and Victoria Heid Hall (for the state and local impact). The estimate was approved by Peter H. Fontaine, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

REGULATORY IMPACT EVALUATION

In compliance with paragraph 11(b) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee makes the following evaluation of the regulatory impact which would be incurred in carrying out S. 2020. The bill is not a regulatory measure in the sense of imposing Government-established standards or significant economic responsibilities on private individuals and businesses.

No personal information would be collected in administering the program. Therefore, there would be no impact on personal privacy.

Little, if any, additional paperwork would result from the enactment of S. 2020, as ordered reported.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

On June 6, 2000, the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources requested legislative reports from the Department of the Interior and the Office of Management and Budget setting forth Executive agency recommendations on S. 2020. These reports had not been received at the time the report on S. 2020 was filed. When the reports become available, the Chairman will request that they be printed in the Congressional Record for the advice of the Senate. The testimony provided by the National Park Service at the Subcommittee hearing follows:

STATEMENT OF DENIS P. GALVIN, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to present the Department of the Interior's views on S. 2020, to adjust the boundary of the Natchez Trace Parkway in Mississippi, and for other purposes.

The Department supports S. 2020. This legislation would set the stage for completing the southern terminus of Natchez Trace Parkway, which would allow visitors direct access into the historic city of Natchez by way of an historic transportation route. The legislation would provide the authority necessary to build a direct access road from the parkway to the Emerald Mound site.

The historical Natchez Trace extended from Natchez, Mississippi, to Nashville, Tennessee. The trace was the main overland link between the Southwest Territory on the lower Mississippi River and the United States in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. In 1938, Congress established the 445-mile Natchez Trace Parkway as a unit of the National Park System. Currently, the southern end of the parkway is eight miles outside of the city of Natchez

at U.S. Highway 61. The southern terminus, and another segment in the vicinity of Jackson, Mississippi, are the only two parkway segments that still need to be completed.

A southern extension of the parkway has been partially constructed from U.S. Highway 61 to U.S. Highway 84/98, but this four-mile segment will not open to traffic until a terminus alternative has been selected and fully constructed. Planning for the southern terminus has been going on for several decades, but several different options considered over the years were determined to be infeasible. During the 1990's, the possibilities were narrowed to three alternatives that were analyzed in a 1998 Environmental Impact Statement prepared by the National Park Service. The options included a "no action" alternative, the Liberty Road alternative, and the Sergeant Prentiss Drive alternative. After analyzing the total range of the impacts of these alternatives, the National Park Service concluded that the Liberty Road alternative would be the best choice.

S. 2020 reflects the National Park Service's preference for locating the southern terminus at Liberty Road. The bill would expand the boundary of the parkway by approximately 150 acres from the vicinity of St. Catherine Creek to Liberty Road. Land acquisition authority provided by the bill would enable the National Park Service to acquire the property necessary for the construction of an interchange and about four miles of parkway, as called for in the Liberty Road alternative. We anticipate that funding for the necessary land acquisition would be provided by the State of Mississippi, and that funding for construction would be provided through the Federal Lands Highways Program of the Department of Transportation, subject to National Park Service priorities.

S. 2020 would also expand the boundary of the parkway by about 80 acres in the Emerald Mound area, a National Park Service site along the parkway about 10 miles northeast of Natchez. Emerald Mound, which was constructed and used during the Mississippian period (approximately 1300 to 1600 A.D.), is the third largest Indian mound of any type and the second largest ceremonial mound in the United States.

Access to Emerald Mound is in serious need of improvement. Visitors reach the mound by exiting the parkway motor road at milepost 10.3 and traveling about one mile to the parking area on a narrow winding county road with hazardous intersections. The Emerald Mound property lines are not contiguous with the present parkway boundary. The parkway's 1987 general management plan and 1993 land protection plan update call for acquiring 60 to 80 acres of land to construct a three-quarter-mile spur road, parking area, wayside shelter, and trail to Emerald Mound. Besides enhancing visitor use and interpretation and consolidating parkway lands, this project would enable the National Park Service to improve protection and pres-

ervation of this very impressive and valuable ceremonial mound.

In addition, S. 2020 would authorize the Secretary to lease land within the boundary of the parkway to the city of Natchez for purposes compatible with the parkway. Several years ago, the State of Mississippi donated to the National Park Service land that was expected to be used as a right-of-way for the southern terminus. However, this land would not be necessary for the southern terminus under the Liberty Road alternative. The authority provided by S. 2020 would enable the National Park Service to lease a portion of the property to the city of Natchez for public recreational uses.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my statement. I will be pleased to answer any questions you or other members of the Subcommittee may have.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

In compliance with paragraph 12 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee notes that no changes in existing law are made by the bill S. 2020, as ordered reported.

