

109TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# S. 3689

To establish a national historic country store preservation and revitalization program.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 19, 2006

Mr. JEFFORDS introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Environment and Public Works

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## A BILL

To establish a national historic country store preservation and revitalization program.

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 “National Historic  
5 Country Store Preservation and Revitalization Act of  
6 2006”.

7 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

8 Congress finds that—

9 (1) historic country stores are lasting icons of  
10 rural tradition in the United States;

1           (2) historic country stores are valuable contrib-  
2           utors to the civic and economic vitality of their local  
3           communities;

4           (3) historic country stores demonstrate innova-  
5           tive approaches to historic preservation and small  
6           business practices;

7           (4) historic country stores are threatened by  
8           larger competitors and the costs associated with  
9           maintaining older structures; and

10          (5) the United States should—

11                (A) collect and disseminate information  
12                concerning the number, condition, and variety  
13                of historic country stores;

14                (B) develop opportunities for cooperation  
15                among proprietors of historic country stores;  
16                and

17                (C) promote the long-term economic viabil-  
18                ity of historic country stores through the provi-  
19                sion of financial assistance to historic country  
20                stores.

21 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

22           In this Act:

23                (1) COUNTRY STORE.—

24                        (A) IN GENERAL.—The term “country  
25                        store” means a structure independently owned

1 and formerly or currently operated as a busi-  
2 ness that—

3 (i) sells or sold grocery items and  
4 other small retail goods; and

5 (ii) is located in—

6 (I) an economically distressed  
7 area; or

8 (II) a nonmetropolitan area, as  
9 defined by the Secretary.

10 (B) INCLUSION.—The term “country  
11 store” includes a cooperative.

12 (2) ECONOMICALLY DISTRESSED AREA.—The  
13 term “economically distressed area” means an area  
14 that meets 1 or more of the criteria described in sec-  
15 tion 301(a) of the Public Works and Economic De-  
16 velopment Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3161(a)).

17 (3) ELIGIBLE APPLICANT.—The term “eligible  
18 applicant” means—

19 (A) a State department of commerce or  
20 economic development;

21 (B) a national or State nonprofit organiza-  
22 tion that—

23 (i) is described in section 501(c)(3),  
24 and exempt from Federal tax under section

1 501(a), of the Internal Revenue Code of  
2 1986; and

3 (ii)(I) has experience or expertise, as  
4 determined by the Secretary, in the identi-  
5 fication, evaluation, rehabilitation, or pres-  
6 ervation of historic country stores; or

7 (II) is undertaking economic and com-  
8 munity development activities;

9 (C) a national or State nonprofit trade or-  
10 ganization that—

11 (i) is described in section 501(c)(3),  
12 and exempt from Federal tax under section  
13 501(a), of the Internal Revenue Code of  
14 1986; and

15 (ii) acts as a cooperative to promote  
16 and enhance country stores; and

17 (D) a State historic preservation office.

18 (4) FUND.—The term “Fund” means the His-  
19 toric Country Store Revolving Loan Fund estab-  
20 lished under section 5(a).

21 (5) HISTORIC COUNTRY STORE.—The term  
22 “historic country store” means a country store  
23 that—

24 (A) has operated at the same location for  
25 at least 50 years; and

1 (B) retains sufficient integrity of design,  
2 materials, and construction to clearly identify  
3 the structure as a country store.

4 (6) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means  
5 the Secretary of Commerce, acting through the As-  
6 sistant Secretary for Economic Development.

7 **SEC. 4. HISTORIC COUNTRY STORE PRESERVATION AND**  
8 **REVITALIZATION PROGRAM.**

9 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall establish  
10 a historic country store preservation and revitalization  
11 program—

12 (1) to collect and disseminate information on  
13 historic country stores;

14 (2) to promote State and regional partnerships  
15 among proprietors of historic country stores; and

16 (3) to sponsor and conduct research on—

17 (A) the economic impact of historic coun-  
18 try stores in rural areas, including the impact  
19 on unemployment rates and community vitality;

20 (B) best practices to—

21 (i) improve the profitability of historic  
22 country stores; and

23 (ii) protect historic country stores  
24 from foreclosure or seizure; and

1 (C) best practices for developing coopera-  
2 tive organizations that address the economic  
3 and historic preservation needs of—

4 (i) historic country stores; and

5 (ii) the communities served by the his-  
6 toric country stores.

7 (b) GRANTS.—

8 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may make  
9 grants to, or enter into contracts or cooperative  
10 agreements with, eligible applicants to carry out an  
11 eligible project under paragraph (2).

12 (2) ELIGIBLE PROJECTS.—A grant under this  
13 subsection may be made to an eligible applicant for  
14 a project—

15 (A)(i) to rehabilitate or repair a historic  
16 country store; and

17 (ii) to enhance the economic benefit of the  
18 historic country store to the communities served  
19 by the historic country store;

20 (B) to identify, document, and conduct re-  
21 search on historic country stores; and

22 (C) to develop and evaluate appropriate  
23 techniques or best practices for protecting his-  
24 toric country stores.

1           (3) REQUIREMENTS.—An eligible applicant that  
2 receives a grant for an eligible project under para-  
3 graph (1) shall comply with all applicable require-  
4 ments for historic preservation projects under Fed-  
5 eral, State, and local law.

6           (4) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the  
7 date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall  
8 submit to the Committee on Environment and Pub-  
9 lic Works of the Senate and the Committee on  
10 Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of  
11 Representatives a report that—

12                   (A) identifies the number of grants made  
13 under subsection (b);

14                   (B) describes the type of grants made  
15 under subsection (b); and

16                   (C) includes any other information that the  
17 Secretary determines to be appropriate.

18       (c) COUNTRY STORE ALLIANCE PILOT PROJECT.—

19           (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall carry  
20 out a pilot project in the State of Vermont under  
21 which the Secretary shall conduct demonstration ac-  
22 tivities to preserve historic country stores and the  
23 communities served by the historic country stores,  
24 including—

1 (A) the collection and dissemination of in-  
2 formation on historic country stores in the  
3 State;

4 (B) the development of collaborative coun-  
5 try store marketing and purchasing techniques;  
6 and

7 (C) the development of best practices for  
8 historic country store proprietors and commu-  
9 nities facing transitions involved in the sale or  
10 closure of a historic country store.

11 (2) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the  
12 date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall  
13 submit to the Committee on Environment and Pub-  
14 lic Works of the Senate and the Committee on  
15 Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of  
16 Representatives a report that—

17 (A) describes the results of the pilot  
18 project; and

19 (B) includes any recommended changes of  
20 the Secretary to the program established under  
21 subsection (a), based on the results of the pilot  
22 project.



1 **SEC. 5. HISTORIC COUNTRY STORE REVOLVING LOAN**  
2 **FUND.**

3 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 120 days after  
4 the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the  
5 Treasury shall establish in the Treasury of the United  
6 States a revolving fund, to be known as the “Historic  
7 Country Store Revolving Loan Fund”, consisting of—

8 (1) such amounts as are appropriated to the  
9 Fund under subsection (b);

10 (2)  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the amounts appropriated under sec-  
11 tion 8(a); and

12 (3) any interest earned on investment of  
13 amounts in the Fund under subsection (d).

14 (b) TRANSFERS TO FUND.—There are appropriated  
15 to the Fund amounts equivalent to—

16 (1) the amounts repaid on loans under section  
17 6; and

18 (2) the amounts of the proceeds from the sales  
19 of notes, bonds, obligations, liens, mortgages and  
20 property delivered or assigned to the Secretary pur-  
21 suant to loans made under section 6.

22 (c) EXPENDITURES FROM FUND.—

23 (1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2), on  
24 request by the Secretary, the Secretary of the Treas-  
25 ury shall transfer from the Fund to the Secretary

1 such amounts as the Secretary determines are nec-  
2 essary to provide loans under section 6.

3 (2) ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.—An amount  
4 not exceeding 10 percent of the amounts in the  
5 Fund shall be available for each fiscal year to pay  
6 the administrative expenses necessary to carry out  
7 this Act.

8 (d) INVESTMENT OF AMOUNTS.—

9 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Treas-  
10 ury shall invest such portion of the Fund as is not,  
11 in the judgment of the Secretary of the Treasury,  
12 required to meet current withdrawals.

13 (2) INTEREST-BEARING OBLIGATIONS.—Invest-  
14 ments may be made only in interest-bearing obliga-  
15 tions of the United States.

16 (3) ACQUISITION OF OBLIGATIONS.—For the  
17 purpose of investments under paragraph (1), obliga-  
18 tions may be acquired—

19 (A) on original issue at the issue price; or

20 (B) by purchase of outstanding obligations  
21 at the market price.

22 (4) SALE OF OBLIGATIONS.—Any obligation ac-  
23 quired by the Fund may be sold by the Secretary of  
24 the Treasury at the market price.

1           (5) CREDITS TO FUND.—The interest on, and  
2           the proceeds from the sale or redemption of, any ob-  
3           ligations held in the Fund shall be credited to and  
4           form a part of the Fund.

5           (e) TRANSFERS OF AMOUNTS.—

6           (1) IN GENERAL.—The amounts required to be  
7           transferred to the Fund under this section shall be  
8           transferred at least monthly from the general fund  
9           of the Treasury to the Fund on the basis of esti-  
10          mates made by the Secretary of the Treasury.

11          (2) ADJUSTMENTS.—Proper adjustment shall  
12          be made in amounts subsequently transferred to the  
13          extent prior estimates were in excess of or less than  
14          the amounts required to be transferred.

15 **SEC. 6. LOANS FOR HISTORIC COUNTRY STORE REHABILI-**  
16 **TATION OR REPAIR PROJECTS.**

17          (a) IN GENERAL.—Using amounts in the Fund, the  
18          Secretary may make direct loans to eligible applicants for  
19          projects—

20                (1) to purchase, rehabilitate, or repair historic  
21                country stores; or

22                (2) to establish microloan funds to make short-  
23                term, fixed-interest rate loans to proprietors of his-  
24                toric country stores.

25          (b) APPLICATIONS.—

1           (1) IN GENERAL.—To be eligible for a loan  
2 under this section, an eligible applicant shall submit  
3 to the Secretary a complete application for a loan  
4 that addresses the criteria described in paragraph  
5 (2).

6           (2) CONSIDERATIONS FOR APPROVAL OR DIS-  
7 APPROVAL.—In determining whether to approve or  
8 disapprove an application for a loan submitted under  
9 paragraph (1), the Secretary shall consider—

10                   (A) the demonstrated need for the pur-  
11 chase, construction, reconstruction, or renova-  
12 tion of the historic country store based on the  
13 condition of the historic country store;

14                   (B) the age of the historic country store;

15                   (C) the extent to which the project to pur-  
16 chase, rehabilitate, or repair the historic coun-  
17 try store includes collaboration among historic  
18 country store proprietors and other eligible ap-  
19 plicants; and

20                   (D) any other criteria that the Secretary  
21 determines to be appropriate.

22           (c) REQUIREMENTS.—An eligible applicant that re-  
23 ceives a loan for a project under this section shall comply  
24 with all applicable standards for historic preservation  
25 projects under Federal, State, and local law.

1 (d) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date  
2 on which the Fund is established under subsection (a),  
3 and every 2 years thereafter, the Secretary shall submit  
4 to the Committee on Environment and Public Works of  
5 the Senate and the Committee on Transportation and In-  
6 frastructure of the House of Representatives a report  
7 that—

8 (1) identifies—

9 (A) the number of loans provided under  
10 this section;

11 (B) the repayment rate of the loans; and

12 (C) the default rate of the loans; and

13 (2) includes any other information that the Sec-  
14 retary determines to be appropriate.

15 **SEC. 7. PERFORMANCE REPORT.**

16 Any eligible applicant that receives financial assist-  
17 ance under this Act shall, for each fiscal year for which  
18 the eligible applicant receives the financial assistance, sub-  
19 mit to the Secretary a performance report that—

20 (1) describes—

21 (A) the allocation of the amount of finan-  
22 cial assistance received under this Act;

23 (B) the economic benefit of the financial  
24 assistance, including a description of—

1 (i) the number of jobs retained or cre-  
2 ated; and

3 (ii) the tax revenues generated; and

4 (2) addresses any other reporting requirements  
5 established by the Secretary.

6 **SEC. 8. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be appro-  
8 priated to carry out this Act, \$50,000,000 for the period  
9 of fiscal years 2006 through 2011, to remain available  
10 until expended.

11 (b) COUNTRY STORE ALLIANCE PILOT PROJECT.—  
12 Of the amount made available under subsection (a), not  
13 less than \$250,000 shall be made available to carry out  
14 section 4(c).

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