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SENATE

{ REPORT
109-22

UPPER CONNECTICUT RIVER PARTNERSHIP ACT

MARCH 8, 2005.—Ordered to be printed

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

R E P O R T

[To accompany S. 301]

The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, to which was referred the bill (S. 301) to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to provide assistance in implementing cultural heritage, conservation, and recreational activities in the Connecticut River watershed of the States of New Hampshire and Vermont, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon with an amendment and recommends that the bill, as amended, do pass.

The amendment is as follows:

In section 5, strike “for each fiscal year” and insert “for each of fiscal years 2006 through 2015”.

PURPOSE OF THE MEASURE

The purpose of S. 301 is to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to provide assistance in implementing cultural heritage, conservation, and recreational activities in the Connecticut River watershed of the States of New Hampshire and Vermont.

BACKGROUND AND NEED

The Connecticut River is New England’s largest river ecosystem and one of the Nation’s 14 American Heritage Rivers. Its watershed encompasses over 11,000 square miles of wild, rural, and urban lands in parts of four states—Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont. The Connecticut River Valley’s rich history, economic vitality, and renewed environmental integrity are at the heart of the region’s quality of life and sense of place.

Known to Native Americans as Quenticut, “the long tidal river,” the Connecticut carves a sinuous, shimmering pathway south from

Fourth Connecticut Lake at the Canadian border—past forested mountains and small hamlets, through rich farmlands and large cities—to empty 410 miles later into Long Island Sound.

Dammed and dumped in over the past 150 years, the Connecticut gained the reputation by the mid-twentieth century of being the Nation’s “best landscaped sewer.” People and communities turned their backs to it. Spring runs of Atlantic salmon and American shad disappeared.

Following passage of the Federal Clean Water Act in 1972, communities and businesses stopped using the River as a dump. Today the water quality in the River and its tributaries is dramatically improved. Salmon and shad are returning, and community riverfronts are being revitalized.

The rich natural diversity and special qualities of the Connecticut and its watershed have gained both national and international recognition. It was designated an American Heritage River in 1998, the entire watershed is a National Fish and Wildlife Refuge, and its tidal wetlands are of international importance. Additional Federal assistance through a grants program within the watershed will allow the recovery processes to continue with enhanced community participation.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

S. 301 was introduced by Senators Leahy, Judd, Sununu and Jeffords on February 7, 2005. During the 108th Congress, the Committee considered identical legislation, S. 1433, sponsored by Senators Leahy, Jeffords and Gregg. S. 1433 was discharged from the Committee and passed the Senate by unanimous consent, on October 10, 2004. The House of Representatives did not consider the bill prior to the *sine die* adjournment of the 108th Congress.

At its business meeting on February 16, 2005, the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources ordered S. 301 favorably reported, as amended.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, in an open business session on February 16, 2005, by a unanimous voice vote of a quorum present, recommends that the Senate pass S. 301, if amended as described herein.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT

During its consideration of S. 301, the Committee adopted an amendment to limit appropriations to \$1 million for each of fiscal years 2006 through 2015.

SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

Section 1 entitles the bill “Upper Connecticut River Partnership Act.”

Section 2 sets forth congressional findings.

Section 3 defines key terms in the Act.

Section 4 establishes the Connecticut River Grants and Technical Assistance Program.

Section 4(b) directs the Secretary and Connecticut River Joint Commissions to develop criteria for the grants and technical assistance program.

Section 4(c) defines the cost sharing percentage for projects to be carried out under the grant program as not to exceed 75 percent for the Federal share, and allows for the non-Federal share to include in-kind contributions of services and materials.

Section 5 authorizes appropriations to carry out S. 301 at \$1 million for each of the fiscal years 2006–2015.

COST AND BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS

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

S. 301—Upper Connecticut River Partnership Act

Summary: S. 301 would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to establish the Connecticut River Grants and Technical Assistance program to provide such assistance to the states of New Hampshire and Vermont as well as to local governments, nonprofit organizations, and private-sector organizations within those states. The grants and technical assistance would help those groups conduct projects for conservation, restoration, and interpretation of historic and cultural resources within the Connecticut River watershed. The bill would authorize the appropriation of \$1 million annually over the 2006–2015 period for these purposes. S. 301 would limit the Federal share of the cost of such projects to 75 percent.

Assuming appropriations of the authorized amounts, CBO estimates that implementing S. 301 would cost \$4 million over the 2006–2010 period and an additional \$6 million after that period. Enacting S. 301 would not affect direct spending or revenues.

S. 301 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA) and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments. The federal assistance authorized by this act would benefit the states of New Hampshire and Vermont and local governments in those states.

Estimated cost to the Federal Government: The estimated budgetary impact of S. 301 is shown in the following table. The costs of this legislation fall within budget function 300 (natural resources and environment).

	By fiscal year, in millions of dollars—					
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
CHANGES IN SPENDING SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATION						
Estimated Authorization Level	0	1	1	1	1	1
Estimated Outlays	0	*	1	1	1	1

Note.—* = less than \$500,000.

Basis of estimate: For this estimate, CBO assumes that S. 301 will be enacted before the end of the fiscal year 2005 and that the necessary amounts will be appropriated in each fiscal year starting in 2006. Based on historical spending patterns of similar programs, CBO estimates that implementing the bill would cost \$4 million over the 2006–2010 period and an additional \$6 million after that period.

Intergovernmental and private-sector impact: S. 301 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in UMRA and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments. The Federal assistance authorized by this act would benefit the states of New Hampshire and Vermont and local governments in those states.

Estimate prepared by: Federal Costs: Julie Middleton; Impact on State, Local, and Tribal Governments: Marjorie Miller; and Impact on the Private Sector: Jean Talarico.

Estimate 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. 301.

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. 301.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

On February 16, 2005, the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources requested legislative reports from the Department of Interior and the Office of Management and Budget setting forth executive views on S. 301. These views had not been received at the time this report 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.

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. 301 as ordered reported.