

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1516

To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of the Cahokia Mounds, Emerald Mounds, and Pulcher Mounds in the State of Illinois, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 29, 2025

Mr. DURBIN (for himself and Ms. DUCKWORTH) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

A BILL

To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of the Cahokia Mounds, Emerald Mounds, and Pulcher Mounds in the State of Illinois, and for other purposes.

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 “Cahokia Mounds Mis-
5 sissippian Culture Study Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds that—

8 (1) the city of Cahokia—

1 (A) was inhabited from approximately A.D.
2 700 to 1400; and

3 (B) at its peak from A.D. 1050 to 1200—
4 (i) covered nearly 6 square miles; and
5 (ii) was home to 10,000 to 20,000
6 people;

7 (2) more than 120 mounds were built over time
8 at the site of the city of Cahokia;

9 (3) the site of the city of Cahokia is named for
10 the Cahokia subtribe of the Illinois Confederation,
11 who moved into the area in the 1600s;

12 (4) the city of Cahokia was the central hub and
13 largest city of the Mississippian culture that ruled
14 and traded across half of North America, more than
15 1,250,000 square miles;

16 (5) the city of Cahokia—

17 (A) was the first known organized urban-
18 ization and government north of Mexico; and

19 (B) at its peak, was larger than most Eu-
20 ropean cities, including London;

21 (6) some of the Cahokia Mounds, which were
22 built from A.D. 900 to 1400, still stand as earthen
23 monuments and remnants of Mississippian culture,
24 which is the greatest prehistoric ancient culture in

1 North America, the people of which are ancestors to
2 many of today's First People and Nations; and

3 (7) the Cahokia Mounds are designated as—

4 (A) a National Historic Landmark;

5 (B) an Illinois State Historic Site; and

6 (C) a United Nations Educational, Sci-
7 entific, and Cultural Organization World Herit-
8 age Site.

9 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

10 In this Act:

11 (1) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
12 the Secretary of the Interior.

13 (2) STUDY AREA.—The term “Study Area”
14 means—

15 (A) the Cahokia Mounds State Historic
16 Site;

17 (B) the Emerald Mounds in St. Clair
18 County, Illinois; and

19 (C) the Pulcher Mounds in Monroe and St.
20 Clair Counties, Illinois.

21 **SEC. 4. SPECIAL RESOURCE STUDY.**

22 (a) STUDY.—The Secretary shall conduct a special
23 resource study of the Study Area.

24 (b) CONTENTS.—In conducting the study under sub-
25 section (a), the Secretary shall—

1 (1) evaluate the national significance of the
2 Study Area;

3 (2) determine the suitability and feasibility of
4 designating the Study Area as a unit of the National
5 Park System;

6 (3) consider other alternatives for preservation,
7 protection, and interpretation of the Study Area
8 by—

9 (A) Federal, State, or local governmental
10 entities; or

11 (B) private and nonprofit organizations;

12 (4) consult with—

13 (A) interested entities of the Federal Gov-
14 ernment or State or local governmental entities;

15 (B) private and nonprofit organizations; or

16 (C) any other interested individuals; and

17 (5) identify cost estimates for any Federal ac-
18 quisition, development, interpretation, operation, and
19 maintenance associated with the alternatives consid-
20 ered under paragraph (3).

21 (c) APPLICABLE LAW.—The study required under
22 subsection (a) shall be conducted in accordance with sec-
23 tion 100507 of title 54, United States Code.

24 (d) REPORT.—Not later than 3 years after the date
25 on which funds are first made available to conduct the

1 study required under subsection (a), the Secretary shall
2 submit to the Committee on Energy and Natural Re-
3 sources of the Senate and the Committee on Natural Re-
4 sources of the House of Representatives a report con-
5 taining—

6 (1) the results of the study; and

7 (2) any conclusions and recommendations of the
8 Secretary.

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