

WESTERN RESERVE HERITAGE  
AREAS STUDY ACT

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3257) to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to determine the suitability and feasibility of establishing the Western Reserve Heritage Area, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 3257

*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 "Western Reserve Heritage Areas Study Act".*

**SEC. 2. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE STUDY REGARDING THE WESTERN RESERVE, OHIO.**

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

(1) *The area that encompasses the modern-day counties of Trumbull, Mahoning, Ashtabula, Portage, Geauga, Lake, Cuyahoga, Summit, Medina, Huron, Lorain, Erie, Ottawa, and Ashland in Ohio with the rich history in what was once the Western Reserve, has made a unique contribution to the cultural, political and industrial development of the United States.*

(2) *The Western Reserve is distinctive as the land settled by the people of Connecticut after the Revolutionary War. The Western Reserve holds a unique mark as the original wilderness land of the West that many settlers migrated to in order to begin life outside of the original 13 colonies.*

(3) *The Western Reserve played a significant role in providing land to the people of Connecticut whose property and land was destroyed during the Revolution. These settlers were descendants of the brave immigrants who came to the Americas in the 17th century.*

(4) *The Western Reserve offered a new destination for those who moved west in search of land and prosperity. The agricultural and industrial base that began in the Western Reserve still lives strong in these prosperous and historical counties.*

(5) *The heritage of the Western Reserve remains transixed in the counties of Trumbull, Mahoning, Ashtabula, Portage, Geauga, Lake, Cuyahoga, Summit, Medina, Huron, Lorain, Erie, Ottawa, and Ashland in Ohio. The people of these counties are proud of their heritage as shown through the unwavering attempts to preserve agricultural land and the industrial foundation that has been embedded in this region since the establishment of the Western Reserve. Throughout these counties, historical sites, and markers preserve the unique traditions and customs of its original heritage.*

(6) *The counties that encompass the Western Reserve continue to maintain a strong connection to its historic past as seen through its preservation of its local heritage, including historic homes, buildings, and centers of public gatherings.*

(7) *There is a need for assistance for the preservation and promotion of the significance of the Western Reserve as the natural, historic and cultural heritage of the counties of Trumbull, Mahoning, Ashtabula, Portage, Geauga, Lake, Cuyahoga, Summit, Medina, Huron, Lorain, Erie, Ottawa and Ashland in Ohio.*

(8) *The Department of the Interior is responsible for protecting the Nation's cultural and historical resources. There are significant examples of such resources within these counties and what was once the Western Reserve to merit the involvement of the Federal Government in the development of programs and projects, in cooperation with the State of Ohio and other local 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 Ohio, the counties of Trumbull, Mahoning, Ashtabula, Portage, Geauga, Lake, Cuyahoga, Summit, Medina, Huron, Lorain, Erie, Ottawa, and Ashland, and other appropriate organizations, carry out a study regarding the suitability and feasibility of establishing the Western Reserve Heritage Area in these counties in Ohio.*

(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;*

(H) *has a conceptual boundary map that is supported by the public; and*

(I) *has potential or actual impact on private property located within or abutting the Study Area.*

(c) **BOUNDARIES OF THE STUDY AREA.**—*The Study Area shall be comprised of the counties of Trumbull, Mahoning, Ashtabula, Portage, Geauga, Lake, Cuyahoga, Summit, Medina, Huron, Lorain, Erie, Ottawa, and Ashland in Ohio.*

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. PEARCE).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Mexico?

There was no objection.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3257 sponsored by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) and amended by the Committee on Resources would authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to

determine the suitability and feasibility of establishing the Western Reserve Heritage Area. The proposed study area under this bill would encompass 14 modern-day counties in Ohio which throughout history have made a unique contribution to the cultural, political and industrial development of the United States.

The Western Reserve is every bit as distinctive as the land settled by the people of Connecticut after the Revolutionary War and holds a unique mark as the original wilderness in the West that many settlers migrated to in order to begin life outside the original 13 colonies.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 3257, as amended, is supported by the majority and minority of the committee and by the administration. I urge adoption of this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Mr. Speaker, our system of national heritage areas, created over the last two decades, has been enormously successful. These are grassroots projects that leverage limited Federal support to develop locally funded and managed conservation and preservation programs.

Areas rich in historic and scenic resources but which might not qualify for inclusion in the National Park System receive the funding they need through the National Heritage Area Program. H.R. 3257 will authorize a study to determine whether or not the area in Ohio once known as the Western Reserve would qualify as a National Heritage Area.

Mr. Speaker, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) is to be commended for his tireless efforts on behalf of the communities that would be included in this new area. The gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) is a freshman member of this body, but he is already demonstrating a willingness to go to bat for communities in need of the kind of Federal support the Heritage Area Program can provide. We look forward to working with him to create the Western Reserve Heritage Area should the study we are authorizing today support such a move.

The gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL) and I congratulate the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN) on this important legislation, and I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3257.

Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. RYAN).

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Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me this time. And I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the gentleman from California (Chairman POMBO) for the opportunity to do this study.

This is a tremendous opportunity for our community. We have had a ton of

issues in Northern Ohio and in Northeast Ohio, and I would like to just thank the chairman for giving me an opportunity to help us try to redefine our community. I would also like to thank the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL), ranking member, who has been a tremendous help and support in guidance and his counsel over the past couple of years since I have been in Congress on a variety of issues, but this one in particular. I would also like to thank Jim Zoia on his staff for helping us with the day-to-day operations. I would also like to thank Jennifer Moore on my staff and my chief of staff, Mary Anne Walsh, for their help in making this happen.

The Western Reserve, as has been stated already, was the original West. There were many people from the American Revolution who were forced out of their houses and their homes over into the West, just west of Pennsylvania into Northern Ohio, and it was 14 original counties that are still there today; and there have been significant changes. But since 1792, this area has always represented a place that was indicative, I think, of the American spirit, and the people who were there were very industrious, and they came there with that spirit; and we have had enormous success.

The Western Reserve has been the leader and has showed great progress since 1792. It has been the foundation of the steel industry. It has been the rubber capital of the world. It had the first African American newspaper. It has the oldest labor newspaper. In the last 25 or 30 years or so, this area has had some great challenges. With the decimation, really, of the steel industry in the United States of America, this area took a great fall, and there have been enormous challenges throughout the whole manufacturing sector in these 14 counties, which I think makes this legislation that much more significant because we need to preserve what I believe to be the real history of these communities, a history of progress, a history of economic progress, a history of participation in the social justice aspects of our society.

And I think it is important for us through this heritage corridor to communicate to our children and to our grandchildren that they come from an area that once led the world in the economic and social arenas.

This is the area for the first electric street car, the first Warner Brothers film. The first Packard car was produced in this area; the baseball score card; and one of my favorites, the hot dog, was invented in the old Connecticut Western Reserve; also, the American trucking industry.

And we want our children to know that they come from a place that had three Presidents, President Garfield, President McKinley, President Hayes; three United States Supreme Court justices; Thomas Edison; John Brown the great abolitionist. And the success of our future depends on our under-

standing of the past. As the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL) said, this heritage corridor in many instances throughout this country provides the economic engine for rebirth of an area, and that is exactly what we need.

We are working on regionalization in Northeast Ohio, and we cannot just have economic regionalization. We need the cultural and historic preservations and have all the groups in our community working together, and this is the rallying point for our community.

So I want to thank, again, the chairman. I want to thank the gentleman from West Virginia (Mr. RAHALL) for helping us improve the quality of life in our community. I would like to thank the gentleman from New Mexico, as well, because I think if these kids and our grandkids know that they come from this stock of Presidents and inventors and entrepreneurs and scientists and many others who have contributed to the economic progress of our country and the social justice of our country that they will be inspired to continue this proud tradition.

Mr. RAHALL. Mr. Speaker, as the Ranking Democratic Member of the Resources Committee, it is a pleasure and privilege to have H.R. 3257, sponsored by our esteemed colleague from Ohio, TIM RYAN, be considered on the floor today.

The dramatic tapestry of our Nation's cultural heritage is one which many of us are seeking to preserve for the benefit of not just current, but future generations, in the form of National Heritage Areas. We do this not just for educational or inspirational purposes, but also, because heritage areas are engines for economic development.

While the measure pending before us today is the logical first step, an authorization of a feasibility study for a proposed Western Reserve Heritage Area, I am confident that once completed, it will find that this particular region of Ohio deserves national recognition for the special cultural and historic resources values it contains. And when that day arrives, it will be a tribute to the untiring dedication and hard work of Representative TIM RYAN.

Indeed, although a freshman Member of this body, TIM RYAN has already garnered a reputation as a fighter for the people of the 17th District of Ohio. The bill we are considering today is reflective of their good judgment in sending a person such as TIM RYAN to Congress to represent them.

I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3257.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Ohio for his comments, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BOOZMAN). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. PEARCE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3257, 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.

#### RAILROAD RIGHT-OF-WAY CONVEYANCE VALIDATION ACT OF 2003

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 1658) to amend the Railroad Right-of-Way Conveyance Validation Act to validate additional conveyances of certain lands in the State of California that form part of the right-of-way granted by the United States to facilitate the construction of the transcontinental railway, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

Senate amendment:

Page 2, line 12, strike out "104" and insert "401".

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

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. PEARCE).

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Mexico?

There was no objection.

Mr. PEARCE. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from California (Chairman POMBO).

Mr. POMBO. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 1658 would amend the Railroad Right-of-Way Conveyance Validation Act to legalize, validate, and confirm as far as any interest of the United States is concerned two additional conveyances in San Joaquin County, California. These conveyances involve lands forming part of a right-of-way granted by the U.S. to the Central Pacific Railroad Company under previous law. This bill would declare the conveyances to be between the railroad company and the Bank of America recorded in September, 1945, and between the railroad company, the Southern Pacific Transportation, and the Tri-Valley Packing Association recorded in November of 1957. In short, this bill would lift the cloud over the title to these lands.

This bill passed the House of Representatives by unanimous consent on November 18, 2003. It has been returned to the House for further consideration