



Protecting America's Heritage Areas

117th Congress

Sponsors: Paul Tonko (D-NY), David McKinley (R-WV)

"We are all trustees for the American people, custodians of the American heritage."

❖ John F. Kennedy, 1962 State of the Union

Heritage Areas Tell America's Stories

- America's 55 National Heritage Areas are sites of cultural, historical or natural significance supported by public-private partnerships preserving and celebrating these local treasures.
- Supporting partnerships bring local, state & private stakeholders together in Congressional districts across the U.S. to share previously untold stories & bring new voices to the fore
- The process for establishing, funding and managing National Heritage Areas is haphazard. As a result, areas of great local importance are often underutilized and can even fall into disrepair.

Major Economic & Social Benefits

- Cultural heritage tourism adds more than **\$192 billion** to the U.S. economy every year
- Public & private partners match an avg. **\$5.50** for every **\$1** in federal funding – a **nearly 6:1 return on investment for taxpayers**
- Sites support more than 148,000 jobs every year, and that's not all:
 - **53,000 volunteers** engage with **55 established heritage areas**
 - **200 education programs** that reach **more than 600,000 people** a year
 - 880 miles of new trails & nearly 200 miles of preserved waterways & historic canals
 - Water and air quality improvements through restoration projects



Public and private partners match an average of **\$5.50** for every **\$1** in federal funding for heritage sites.

Congress Can Do Better!

The National Heritage Area Act

- Establishes, for the first time, standard criteria for designating new National Heritage Areas and creates a rigorous process for evaluating and maintaining existing National Heritage Areas
- Modernizes the program to allow for long-term sustainability and strong accountability
- Defines an oversight structure that will effectively allow these popular public-private partnerships to better preserve the nation's heritage and spur economic growth with more consistent federal support for these important natural, scenic, historic, cultural, and recreational resources

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