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107TH CONGRESS, 2d Session | SENATE | REPORT 107–264

WACO MAMMOTH SITE AREA

SEPTEMBER 9, 2002.—Ordered to be printed

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

R E P O R T

[To accompany H.R. 1925]

The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, to which was referred the Act (H.R. 1925) to direct the Secretary of the Interior to study the suitability and feasibility of designating the Waco Mammoth Site Area in Waco, Texas, as a unit of the National Park System, and for other purposes, having considering the same, reports favorably thereon without amendment and recommends that the Act do pass.

PURPOSE

The purpose of H.R. 1925 is to direct the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the State of Texas, the city of Waco, and other appropriate organizations, to study the suitability and feasibility of designating the Waco Mammoth Site Area in Waco, Texas, as a unit of the National Park System.

BACKGROUND AND NEED

Located near the confluence of the Brazos and Bosque rivers in Central Texas, the Waco Mammoth Site area is near the city of Waco. After hearing reports about bones emerging from eroding creek banks in 1978, a Baylor University staff member began investigating the site. Portions of five mammoths were uncovered from 1978 to 1981. By 1997, the bones of twenty-two Colombian mammoths, warm weather cousins to the woolly mammoth, had been unearthed.

This discovery has attracted international attention. Evidence indicates that the deaths and mass burial of the animals was from natural causes, not the intervention of man. These finds make the Waco Mammoth Site the largest known concentration of a single

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herd of mammoths dying from the same event. H.R. 1925 would authorize the National Park Service to undertake a study to determine if the site would be appropriate for designation as a unit of the National Park System.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

H.R. 1925 was introduced by Representative Chet Edwards on May 21, 2001. The House of Representatives passed the bill by voice vote on May 14, 2002. The Subcommittee on National Parks held a hearing on H.R. 1925 on July 18, 2002. At the business meeting on July 31, 2002, the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources ordered H.R. 1925 favorably reported.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, in open business session on July 31, 2002, by a voice vote of a quorum present, recommends that the Senate pass H.R. 1925.

SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

Section 1 directs the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a suitability and feasibility study and sets forth requirements for conducting the study and consultation.

Section 2 provides that a report on the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the study be submitted to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate and the Committee on Resources of the House of Representatives within 3 years from the date on which funds are made available.

COST AND BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS

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

U.S. CONGRESS,
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,
Washington, DC, August 9, 2002.

Hon. JEFF BINGAMAN,
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Natural Resources,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has prepared the enclosed cost estimate for H.R. 1925, an act to direct the Secretary of the Interior to study the suitability and feasibility of designating the Waco Mammoth Site Area in Waco, Texas, as a unit of the National Park System.

If you wish further details on this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them. The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Deborah Reis.

Sincerely,

BARRY B. ANDERSON
(For Dan L. Crippen, Director).

Enclosure.

H.R. 1925—An act to direct the Secretary of the Interior to study the suitability and feasibility of designating the Waco Mammoth Site Area in Waco, Texas, as a unit of the National Park System

H.R. 1925 would require the National Park Service (NPS) to conduct a study on the suitability and feasibility of making the Waco Mammoth Site Area in Texas a unit of the National Park System. The legislation would require the agency to report to the Congress on its findings within three years of receiving funds for the study.

Based on information provided by the NPS, CBO estimates that completing the required study and report would cost the federal government $300,000 over the next three years, assuming availability of appropriated funds. H.R. 1925 would not affect direct spending or receipts; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures would not apply. The act contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments.

On November 28, 2001, CBO transmitted a cost estimate for H.R. 1925 as ordered reported by the House Committee on Resources on November 28, 2001. The two versions of the legislation are identical, as are the cost estimates.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Deborah Reis. The estimate was 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 H.R. 1925. 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 H.R. 1925, as ordered reported.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

The pertinent legislative report received by the Committee from the Department of the Interior setting forth Executive agency recommendations relating to H.R. 1925 is set forth below:

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY,
Washington, DC, July 26, 2002.

Hon. JEFF BINGAMAN,
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Natural Resources,
U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: This letter sets forth the views of the Department of the Interior on H.R. 1925. This bill would require the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to determine the national significance, suitability and feasibility of designating the Waco Mammoth Site in Waco, Texas as a unit of the National Park

System. H.R. 1925 passed the House of Representatives on May 14, 2002.

The Department supports this bill. However, the Department did not request additional funding for this study in Fiscal Year 2003. We believe that any funding requested should be directed towards completing previously authorized studies. Presently, there are 34 studies pending, of which we expect to transmit four to Congress by the end of 2002. To meet the President's Initiative to eliminate the deferred maintenance backlog, we must continue to focus our resources on caring for existing areas in the National Park System. Thus, we have concerns about adding new funding requirements for new park units, national trails, wild and scenic rivers or heritage areas at the same time that we are trying to reduce the deferred maintenance backlog. As such, the Department will identify all acquisition, one-time and operational costs of the proposed site. At this time, those costs are unknown.

H.R. 1925 calls of the completion of a special resource study of the Waco Mammoth Site that determines the national significance, suitability and feasibility of designating the site as a unit of the National Park System. The bill calls for the study to be completed under the guidelines in P.L. 91–383 and submission of the study results to Congress not later than three years after funds are first made available for the Act.

The Waco Mammoth Site area is located near the confluence of the Brazos and the Bosque rivers in Central Texas, not far from the city of Waco. Baylor University has been investigating the site since 1978 after hearing about bones emerging from eroding creek banks that led to the uncovering of portions of five mammoths. Since then several additional mammoth remains have been uncovered—making this the largest known concentration of mammoths dying from the same event.

The discoveries have received international attention, with archaeologists and paleontologists from Sweden and Great Britain visiting the site. Many of the remains have been excavated and are in storage or still being researched. The University and the city of Waco have been working together to protect the site, as well as develop further research and educational opportunities.

The Office of Management and Budget advises that there is no objection to the presentation of this report from the standpoint of the Administration's program.

Sincerely,

CRAIG MANSON,
Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks.

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 Act H.R. 1925, as ordered reported.

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