

TAUNTON, MASSACHUSETTS SPECIAL RESOURCES STUDY
ACT

SEPTEMBER 7, 2004.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State
of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. POMBO, from the Committee on Resources,
submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany H.R. 2129]

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on Resources, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 2129) to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resources study regarding the suitability and feasibility of designating certain historic buildings and areas in Taunton, Massachusetts, as a unit of the National Park System, and for other purposes, having considered the same, report favorably thereon with an amendment and recommend that the bill as amended do pass.

The amendment is as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Taunton, Massachusetts Special Resources Study Act”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) The city of Taunton, Massachusetts, is home to 9 distinct historic districts, with more than 600 properties on the National Register of Historic Places. Included among these districts are the Church Green Historic District, the Courthouse Historic District, the Taunton Green Historic District, and the Reed and Barton Historic District.

(2) All of these districts include buildings and building facades of great historical, cultural, and architectural value.

(3) Taunton Green is the site where the Sons of Liberty first raised the Liberty and Union Flag in 1774, an event that helped to spark a popular movement, culminating in the American Revolution, and Taunton citizens have been among the first to volunteer for America’s subsequent wars.

(4) Robert Treat Paine, a citizen of Taunton, and the first Attorney General of Massachusetts, was a signer of the Declaration of Independence.

(5) Taunton was a leading community in the Industrial Revolution, and its industrial area has been the site of many innovations in such industries as silver manufacture, paper manufacture, and ship building.

(6) The landscaping of the Courthouse Green was designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, who also left landscaping ideas and plans for other areas in the city which have great value and interest as historical archives and objects of future study.

(7) Main Street, which connects many of the historic districts, is home to the Taunton City Hall and the Leonard Block building, 2 outstanding examples of early 19th Century American architecture, as well as many other historically and architecturally significant structures.

(8) The city and people of Taunton have preserved many artifacts, gravesites, and important documents dating back to 1638 when Taunton was founded.

(9) Taunton was and continues to be an important destination for immigrants from Europe and other parts of the world who have helped to give Southeastern Massachusetts its unique ethnic character.

SEC. 3. STUDY.

The Secretary, in consultation with the appropriate State historic preservation officers, State historical societies, the city of Taunton, and other appropriate organizations, shall conduct a special resources study regarding the suitability and feasibility of designating certain historic buildings and areas in Taunton, Massachusetts, as a unit of the National Park System. The study shall be conducted and completed in accordance with section 8(c) of Public Law 91-383 (16 U.S.C. 1a-5(c)) and shall include analysis, documentation, and determinations regarding whether the historic areas in Taunton—

(1) can be managed, curated, interpreted, restored, preserved, and presented as an organic whole under management by the National Park Service or under an alternative management structure;

(2) have an assemblage of natural, historic, and cultural resources that together represent distinctive aspects of American heritage worthy of recognition, conservation, interpretation, and continuing use;

(3) reflect traditions, customs, beliefs, and historical events that are valuable parts of the national story;

(4) provide outstanding opportunities to conserve natural, historic, cultural, architectural, or scenic features;

(5) provide outstanding recreational and educational opportunities; and

(6) can be managed by the National Park Service in partnership with residents, business interests, nonprofit organizations, and State and local governments to develop a unit of the National Park System consistent with State and local economic activity.

SEC. 4. REPORT.

Not later than 3 fiscal years after the date on which funds are first made available for this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Resources of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate a report on the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the study required under section 3.

SEC. 5. PRIVATE PROPERTY.

The recommendations in the report submitted pursuant to section 4 shall discuss and consider the concerns expressed by private landowners with respect to designating the certain structures referred to in this Act as a unit of the National Park System.

SEC. 6. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There is authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of this Act.

PURPOSE OF THE BILL

The purpose of H.R. 2129 is to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resources study regarding the suitability and feasibility of designating certain historic buildings and areas in Taunton, Massachusetts, as a unit of the National Park System, and for other purposes.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

The city of Taunton, Massachusetts, is home to nine distinct historic districts, with more than 600 properties on the National Register of Historic Places. Included among these districts are the Church Green Historic District, the Courthouse Historic District, the Taunton Green Historic District, and the Reed and Barton Historic District. All of these districts include buildings and building facades of great historical, cultural, and architectural value. Taunton Green is the site where the Sons of Liberty first raised the Liberty and Union Flag in 1774, an event that helped to spark a popular movement, culminating in the American Revolution; Taunton citizens have been among the first to volunteer for America's subsequent wars. Taunton was a leading community in the Industrial Revolution, and its industrial area has been the site of many innovations in such industries as silver manufacture, paper manufacture, and shipbuilding. Main Street, which connects many of the historic districts, is home to the Taunton City Hall and the Leonard Block building, two outstanding examples of early 19th Century American architecture, as well as many other historically and architecturally significant structures. Taunton was and continues to be an important destination for immigrants from Europe and other parts of the world who have helped to give southeastern Massachusetts its unique ethnic character.

H.R. 2129 directs the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the appropriate State historic preservation officers, State historical societies, the City of Taunton, and other appropriate organizations, to conduct a special resources study regarding the suitability and feasibility of designating certain historic buildings and areas in Taunton, Massachusetts, as a unit of the National Park System. The study shall be conducted within three years of passage of this Act.

COMMITTEE ACTION

H.R. 2129 was introduced on May 15, 2003, by Congressman Barney Frank (D-MA). The bill was referred to the Committee on Resources, and within the Committee to the Subcommittee on National Parks, Recreation and Public Lands. On June 15, 2004, the Subcommittee held a hearing on the bill. On July 14, 2004, the Full Resource Committee met to consider the bill. The Subcommittee on National Parks, Recreation and Public Lands was discharged from further consideration of this bill by unanimous consent. Chairman Pombo offered an amendment in the nature of a substitute to the bill. Specifically, the amendment added to the requirements of the proposed study a requirement that the Secretary provide an analysis of the impact such a designation would have on private property located within or abutting the historic buildings cited in the bill. The amendment was agreed to by unanimous consent. The bill as amended, was then ordered favorably reported to the House of Representatives by unanimous consent.

COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Regarding clause 2(b)(1) of Rule and clause 3(c)(1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee on Re-

sources oversight findings and recommendations are reflected in the body of this report.

CONSTITUTIONAL AUTHORITY STATEMENT

Article I, section 8 and Article IV, section 3 of the Constitution of the United States grant Congress the authority to enact this bill.

COMPLIANCE WITH HOUSE RULE XIII

1. Cost of Legislation. Clause 3(d)(2) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives requires an estimate and a comparison by the Committee of the costs which would be incurred in carrying out this bill. However, clause 3(d)(3)(B) of that rule provides that this requirement does not apply when the Committee has included in its report a timely submitted cost estimate of the bill prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office under section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

2. Congressional Budget Act. As required by clause 3(c)(2) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives and section 308(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, this bill does not contain any new budget authority, spending authority, credit authority, or an increase or decrease in revenues or tax expenditures.

3. General Performance Goals and Objectives. As required by clause 3(c)(4) of rule XIII, the general performance goal or objective of this bill is to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resources study regarding the suitability and feasibility of designating certain historic buildings and areas in Taunton, Massachusetts, as a unit of the National Park System, and for other purposes.

4. Congressional Budget Office Cost Estimate. Under clause 3(c)(3) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives and section 403 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the Committee has received the following cost estimate for this bill from the Director of the Congressional Budget Office.

U.S. CONGRESS,
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,
Washington, DC, July 28, 2004.

Hon. RICHARD W. POMBO,
*Chairman, Committee on Resources,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has prepared the enclosed cost estimate for H.R. 2129, the Taunton, Massachusetts, Special Resources Study Act.

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

Sincerely,

ELIZABETH M. ROBINSON
(For Douglas Holtz-Eakin, Director).

Enclosure.

H.R. 2129—Taunton, Massachusetts, Special Resources Study Act

H.R. 2129 would direct the Department of the Interior to conduct a special resource study to determine the feasibility and suitability of designating certain historic buildings and areas of Taunton,

Massachusetts, as a unit of the National Park System. The bill would require the department to report its findings and recommendations within three years of receiving funding for the study.

Assuming the availability of appropriated funds, CBO estimates that it would cost less than \$200,000 over the next three years to complete the required study and report. Enacting this legislation would not affect direct spending or revenues.

H.R. 2129 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.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Deborah Reis. The estimate was approved by Peter H. Fontaine, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

COMPLIANCE WITH PUBLIC LAW 104-4

This bill contains no unfunded mandates.

PREEMPTION OF STATE, LOCAL OR TRIBAL LAW

This bill is not intended to preempt any State, local or tribal law.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

If enacted, this bill would make no changes in existing law.

