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HARRIET BEECHER STOWE HOUSE SPECIAL RESOURCE STUDY ACT

JUNE 16, 2008.—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 S. 662]

The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, to which was referred the bill (S. 662) to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study to evaluate resources at the Harriet Beecher Stowe House in Brunswick, Maine, to determine the suitability and feasibility of establishing the site as a unit of the National Park System, and for other purposes, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon with an amendment and recommends that the bill, as amended, do pass.

The amendment is as follows:

Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Harriet Beecher Stowe House Special Resource Study Act”.

SEC. 2. HARRIET BEECHER STOWE HOUSE SPECIAL RESOURCE STUDY.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 3 years after the date on which funds are made available to carry out this Act, the Secretary of the Interior (referred to in this Act as the “Secretary”) shall complete a special resource study of the Harriet Beecher Stowe House in Brunswick, Maine, to evaluate—

(1) the national significance of the Harriet Beecher Stowe House and surrounding land; and

(2) the suitability and feasibility of designating the Harriet Beecher Stowe House and surrounding land as a unit of the National Park System.

(b) **STUDY GUIDELINES.**—In conducting the study authorized under subsection (a), the Secretary shall use the criteria for the study of areas for potential inclusion in the National Park System contained in section 8(c) of Public Law 91–383 (16 U.S.C. 1a–5(c)).

SEC. 3. REPORT.

On completion of the study required under section 3, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate and the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives a report containing the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the study.

SEC. 4. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as are necessary to carry out this Act.

PURPOSE

The purpose of S. 662 is to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study to determine the suitability and feasibility of establishing the Harriet Beecher Stowe House in Brunswick, Maine, as a unit of the National Park System.

BACKGROUND AND NEED

Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811–1896) wrote *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* while living at 63 Federal Street in Brunswick, Maine, from 1850–1852. Her literary success established her as an important author, humanitarian, and abolitionist during the 19th century. Her famous novel introduced many American citizens to the horrors of slavery. The influence of that novel proved to be so great that it prompted President Lincoln, when meeting her, to remark “So you’re the little lady who wrote the book that started this Great War”. *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* has been translated into 23 languages and is still considered by many to be the most famous example of antislavery literature. The Harriet Beecher Stowe House was designated as a National Historic Landmark in 1963.

S. 662 authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study to evaluate the national significance of the Harriet Beecher Stowe House and surrounding land, and the suitability and feasibility of designating the site as a unit of the National Park System.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

S. 662 was introduced by Senator Snowe on February 16, 2007. Senator Collins is a cosponsor. The Subcommittee on National Parks held a hearing on the bill on April 23, 2008.

At its business meeting on May 7, 2008, the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources ordered S. 662 favorably reported, with an amendment in the nature of a substitute.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, in open business session on May 7, 2008, by a voice vote of a quorum present, recommends that the Senate pass S. 662, if amended as described herein.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT

During the consideration of S. 662, the Committee adopted an amendment in the nature of a substitute. The amendment removes the findings section and makes other clarifying and conforming amendments. The amendment is explained in detail in the section-by-section analysis, below.

SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

Section 1 contains the short title, the “Harriet Beecher Stowe House Resource Study Act”.

Section 2(a) directs the Secretary of the Interior to complete a special resource study of the Harriet Beecher Stowe House to assess the suitability and feasibility of designating the site for inclusion in the National Park System. The study is to be completed within 3 years after the date on which funds are made available to carry out this Act.

Subsection (b) directs the Secretary to use the criteria for new area studies described in section 8(c) of Public Law 91–383 (16 U.S.C. 1a–5(c)).

Section 3 requires the Secretary to submit the results of the study to Congress, including any findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the Secretary.

Section 4 authorizes the appropriation of such sums as are necessary to carry out this Act.

COST AND BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS

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

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S. 662 would require the National Park Service (NPS) to conduct a study to determine the suitability and feasibility of establishing the Harriet Beecher Stowe House in Maine as a unit of the National Park System. Based on information provided by the NPS and assuming the availability of appropriated funds, CBO estimates that carrying out the proposed study would cost about \$200,000 over the 2009–2012 period. Enacting the legislation would not affect direct spending or revenues.

S. 662 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would not affect the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Deborah Reis. This estimate was approved by Theresa Gullo, 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 S. 662. 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 S. 662, as ordered reported.

CONGRESSIONALLY DIRECTED SPENDING

S. 662, as reported, does not contain any congressionally directed spending items, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined by rule XLIV of the Standing Rules of the Senate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

The testimony provided by the National Park Service at the April 23, 2008 hearing on S. 662 follows:

STATEMENT OF DANIEL N. WENK, DEPUTY DIRECTOR,
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to appear before your committee to present the views of the Department of the Interior on S. 662, a bill to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to evaluate resources at the Harriet Beecher Stowe House in Brunswick, Maine.

The Department supports the enactment of this bill. However, the Department feels that priority should be given to the 29 previously authorized studies for potential units of the National Park System, potential new National Heritage Areas, and potential additions to the National Trails System and National Wild and Scenic River System that have not yet been transmitted to the Congress.

If enacted, the bill would direct the Secretary to conduct a special resource study to evaluate the national significance of the Harriet Beecher Stowe House and surrounding land, and to assess the suitability and feasibility of including the site as a unit of the National Park System. The study, which is to be completed within three years after funds are made available for it, will follow the criteria for potential new areas contained in section 8(c) of Public Law 91-383 (16 U.S.C. 1a-5(c)) which require such studies to address four areas: significance, suitability, feasibility, and management options.

The Harriet Beecher Stowe House, located at 63 Federal Street, Brunswick, Maine, is a National Historic Landmark whose oldest portion, a 2-story wood frame house, dates from 1807. It was the residence from 1850 to 1852 of Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of the influential indictment of slavery, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which was written here. It was designated as a National Historic Landmark in 1962, and is listed by the National Park Service in its *Underground Railroad* travel guides as a site of interest.

Harriet Elizabeth Beecher (1811-1896) was born in Connecticut and moved with her family to Cincinnati, Ohio in 1832 at the age of 21. There she was a teacher and author, and traveled to Kentucky where she interviewed fugitive slaves and witnessed the brutality of slavery firsthand. In 1836 she married Calvin Ellis Stowe, who later became a professor at Bowdoin College, prompting her move to Brunswick, Maine. She used her personal experiences to develop *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, published as a serial in 1851 in an antislavery newspaper, and in book form the following year. An enormous popular success, its antislavery message provoked strong reactions throughout the South. In response to criticism, she wrote *A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin*, (1853), a collection of factual material on slavery intended to justify the charges implied in the novel. She con-

tinued to lead the life of an active writer, publishing a second anti-slavery novel, poetry, and numerous essays and fictional works about New England social life.

The property at 63 Federal Street was operated as an inn for many years, and was expanded several times to include an attached barn, several ells, and a 54-unit motel. The complex was purchased several years ago by Bowdoin College, which rehabilitated the motel for use as a student dormitory. The main house is not currently in use or open to the public. The college has recently undertaken a study of the historic structure, to identify remaining elements that would have been present during Stowe's era, and to explore various options for preserving it. The college is committed to preserving the building, but is reluctant to undertake the financial burdens of restoring and operating it as a house museum.

The property is one of three former Stowe homes listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The others are houses at 2950 Gilbert Avenue, Cincinnati, Ohio and 73 Forest Street, Hartford, Connecticut, both of which are open to the public as sites honoring Harriet Beecher Stowe. The special resource study would allow National Park Service professionals to build upon the historic structure reports recently prepared for the Bowdoin College house through a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and to assist in the preparation of options for long-term preservation of the National Historic Landmark Harriet Beecher Stowe House.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to comment. This concludes my prepared remarks and I will be happy to answer any questions you or other committee members might have.

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 bill, S. 662, as ordered reported.

