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ACT COMMEMORATING THE LITE, OR LIFETIME INNOVATIONS OF THOMAS EDISON

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 H.R. 2627]

The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, to which was referred the Act (H.R. 2627) to establish the Thomas Edison National Historical Park in the State of New Jersey as the successor to the Edison National Historic Site, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon with an amendment and recommends that the Act, 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 “Act Commemorating the LITE, or Lifetime Innovations of Thomas Edison”.

SEC. 2. PURPOSES.

The purposes of this Act are—

- (1) to recognize and pay tribute to Thomas Alva Edison and his innovations; and
- (2) to preserve, protect, restore, and enhance the Edison National Historic Site to ensure public use and enjoyment of the Site as an educational, scientific, and cultural center.

SEC. 3. THOMAS EDISON NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK.

(a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—There is established the Thomas Edison National Historical Park as a unit of the National Park System (hereafter the “Historical Park”).

(b) **BOUNDARIES.**—The Historical Park shall be comprised of all property owned by the United States in the Edison National Historic Site as well as all property authorized to be acquired by the Secretary of the Interior for inclusion in the Edison National Historic Site before the date of the enactment of this Act, as generally depicted on the map entitled the “Thomas Edison National Historical Park”, numbered 403/80,000, and dated April 2008.

(c) MAP.—The map of the Historical Park shall be on file and available for public inspection in the appropriate offices of the National Park Service.

SEC. 4. ADMINISTRATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall administer the Historical Park in accordance with this Act and with the provisions of law generally applicable to units of the National Park System, including the Acts entitled “An Act to establish a National Park Service, and for other purposes,” approved August 25, 1916 (39 Stat. 535; 16 U.S.C. 1 et seq.) and “An Act to provide for the preservation of historic American sites, buildings, objects, and antiquities of national significance, and for other purposes,” approved August 21, 1935 (16 U.S.C. 461 et seq.).

(b) ACQUISITION OF PROPERTY.—

(1) REAL PROPERTY.—The Secretary may acquire land or interests in land within the boundaries of the Historical Park, from willing sellers only, by donation, purchase with donated or appropriated funds, or exchange.

(2) PERSONAL PROPERTY.—The Secretary may acquire personal property associated with, and appropriate for, interpretation of the Historical Park.

(c) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—The Secretary may consult and enter into cooperative agreements with interested entities and individuals to provide for the preservation, development, interpretation, and use of the Historical Park.

(d) REPEAL OF SUPERSEDED LAW.—Public Law 87–628 (76 Stat. 428), regarding the establishment and administration of the Edison National Historic Site, is repealed.

(e) REFERENCES.—Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the “Edison National Historic Site” shall be deemed to be a reference to the “Thomas Edison National Historical Park”.

SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

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

PURPOSE

The purpose of H.R. 2627 is to redesignate the Edison National Historic Site in the State of New Jersey as the Thomas Edison National Historical Park.

BACKGROUND AND NEED

Thomas Alva Edison was a prodigious inventor who revolutionized how the Nation communicated, harnessed and distributed power, and translated pure technology into commercial products. The Edison National Historic Site, located in West Orange, New Jersey, was Thomas Edison’s second research and development facility. After closing his first operation in Menlo Park, Edison established the West Orange laboratory in 1887.

The laboratory was the hub of Edison’s manufacturing operations until his death in 1931, and the most productive of all his laboratories in terms of the sheer quantity of inventions. More than half of Edison’s 1,093 U.S. patents were developed at this location, including his improved phonograph, the nickel-iron-alkaline battery, and a fluoroscope used in the first x-ray operation in America. It was here, too, that Edison established his motion picture studio, the “Black Maria” in 1893.

Located nearby, previously known as the Edison Home National Historic Site, is the home Edison purchased in 1886. Known as Glenmont, it is a 29-room mansion built of wood, brick, and stone, and typifies the eclectic Queen Anne style popular in the 1880s and 1890s. Both Edison and his second wife are buried behind Glenmont.

In 1962, Congress designated the Edison Laboratory National Monument and the Edison Home National Historic Site as the Edison National Historic Site. The Edison National Historic Site pre-

serves Edison's research and development laboratories, library, papers, and artifacts, as well as his home. The site contains the world's largest collection of materials related to Thomas Edison, encompassing an estimated 5,000,000 pages of documents, over 400,000 artifacts, approximately 35,000 sound recordings, and 10,000 books from Edison's personal library.

On November 6, 1997, the National Park Service signed an agreement with the Thomas Alva Edison Preservation Foundation (now the Edison Preservation Foundation), establishing a public-private partnership to jointly raise money to fund identified improvements at the Edison National Historic Site so as to leave it unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.

H.R. 2627 would re-designate the Edison National Historic Site as the Thomas Edison National Historical Park.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

H.R. 2627 was introduced by Representative Payne (D-NJ) on June 7, 2007. On November 13, 2007, the House of Representatives passed the bill by voice vote. A companion measure, S. 2329, was introduced by Senator Menendez on November 8, 2007. The Subcommittee on National Parks held a hearing on H.R. 2627 on April 9, 2008. The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources ordered it favorably reported on May 7, 2008.

During the 109th Congress, a similar bill, H.R. 1096, was reported by the House Resources Committee (H. Rpt. 109-286) and passed the House, although no further action was taken in the Senate.

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 H.R. 2627, if amended as described herein.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT

During its consideration of H.R. 2627, the Committee adopted an amendment in the nature of a substitute. The amendment strikes the findings, changes the map title and date so that the bill references an updated map, and strikes an unnecessary and redundant provision.

SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

Section 1 contains the short title.

Section 2 sets forth the purposes of the bill.

Section 3(a) establishes the Thomas Edison National Historical Park as a unit of the National Park System.

Subsection (b) describes the boundaries of the Thomas Edison National Historical Park and contains a map reference.

Subsection (c) requires that the map of the Historical Park be on file and available for public inspection in the appropriate offices of the National Park Service.

Section 4(a) requires the Secretary of the Interior to administer the Historical Park in accordance with this Act and with the provi-

sions of law generally applicable to units of the National Park System.

Subsection (b) authorizes the Secretary to acquire land or interests in land within the boundaries of the Historical Park from willing sellers only, by donation, purchase with donated or appropriated funds, or exchange. This subsection also authorizes the Secretary to acquire personal property appropriate for interpretation at the Historical Park.

Subsection (c) authorizes the Secretary to enter into cooperative agreements with interested entities and individuals to provide for the preservation and use of the Historical Park.

Subsection (d) repeals a superseded law.

Subsection (e) states that any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the “Edison National Historic Site” shall be deemed to be a reference to the “Thomas Edison National Historical Park”.

Section 5 authorizes to be appropriated such sums as may be 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:

H.R. 2627—Act Commemorating the LITE, or Lifetime Innovations of Thomas Edison

H.R. 2627 would redesignate the Edison National Historic Site in New Jersey as the Thomas Edison National Historical Park. Based on information provided by the National Park Service (NPS), CBO estimates that implementing this legislation would have no significant effect on the federal budget.

The proposed historical park would have the same boundaries as the existing historic site, and the agency’s authorities to acquire land and execute cooperative agreements with local entities and operate the unit would be similar or identical to those under existing law. We expect that one-time costs to revise NPS brochures, maps, and signs would be minimal because most such revisions would take place in conjunction with scheduled reprinting and other routine maintenance. Any such costs would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds. Enacting H.R. 2627 would not affect revenues or direct spending.

The legislation contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would have no significant impact on the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Deborah Reis. The estimate was approved by Peter H. Fontaine, 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. 2627. 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. 2627, as ordered reported.

CONGRESSIONALLY DIRECTED SPENDING

H.R. 2627, as reported, does not contain any congressionally directed spending items, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in rule XLIV of the Standing Rules of the Senate.

EXECUTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

The views of the Administration were included in testimony received by the Committee at a hearing on H.R. 2627 on April 9, 2008.

STATEMENT OF KATHERINE H. STEVENSON, ACTING ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, BUSINESS SERVICES, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to present the views of the Department of the Interior on S. 2329 and H.R. 2627, bills to establish the Thomas Edison National Historical Park as the successor to the Edison National Historic Site.

The Department supports enactment of these bills.

Thomas Alva Edison was a prodigious inventor who revolutionized how the Nation communicated, harnessed and distributed power, and translated pure technology into commercial products. Edison National Historic Site, located in West Orange, New Jersey, was Thomas Edison's second research and development facility. After closing his first operation in Menlo Park, Edison established the West Orange laboratory in 1887. The hub of Edison's manufacturing operations until his death in 1931, the laboratory was the most productive of all in terms of sheer quantity of inventions. In fact, more than half of Edison's 1,093 U.S. patents were developed at this location including his improved phonograph, the nickel-iron-alkaline battery, and a fluoroscope used in the first x-ray operation in America. It was here, too, that Edison established his motion picture studio, the "Black Maria", in 1893.

In 1962, Congress designated the Edison Laboratory National Monument and Edison Home National Historic Site as the Edison National Historic Site. Glenmont, the home Edison purchased in 1886, and lived in with his second wife, Mina Miller Edison, is located in nearby Llewellyn Park. The 29-room mansion is built of wood, brick and stone and typifies the eclectic Queen Anne style popular in the 1880s and 1890s. Both Edison and his second wife are buried behind Glenmont.

S. 2329 and H.R. 2627 would redesignate the Edison National Historic Site as the Thomas Edison National Historical Park. We believe this redesignation to be appropriate for two main reasons. First, the term "National Historical

Park” generally applies to parks that extend beyond single properties or buildings. This unit of the National Park System includes both the laboratory in West Orange and the separate home established by Edison in nearby Llewellyn Park, one mile away. They are two distinct units with different interpretive themes, resource management issues, and operational challenges.

Second, with completion of the current rehabilitation project at the laboratory complex, the unit’s complexity will increase and the term “National Historic Site” no longer adequately reflects the nature of the various themes that will be interpreted to serve the expected increase in visitation. Educational and interpretive programs linking the laboratory and the Edison home will become more sophisticated and are better represented by the term “National Historical Park” to reflect these non-contiguous parcels with a shared link to Thomas Edison.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my statement and I will be happy to answer any questions that you or members of the Committee may 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, H.R. 2627, as ordered reported.