

STATEMENT OF DANIEL N. WENK, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES REGARDING S. 686, A BILL TO AMEND THE NATIONAL TRAILS SYSTEM ACT TO DESIGNATE THE WASHINGTON-ROCHAMBEAU REVOLUTIONARY ROUTE NATIONAL HISTORIC TRAIL.

April 26, 2007

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to provide the Department of the Interior's views on S. 686, a bill to designate the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route as a national historic trail.

The Department supports enactment of this bill.

The study report on the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route, authorized by P.L. 106-473, continues under public review until May 4, 2007. The study has preliminarily concluded that the trail meets the criteria for designation as a national historic trail. Although we normally prefer to complete studies before making a recommendation, the study's central recommendation is unlikely to change this late in the process. The public comment period will determine if any further revisions to the study are required.

S. 686 would amend the National Trails System Act to designate the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail across nine states and the District of Columbia. The trail would be administered by the Secretary of the Interior in consultation with other Federal, State, tribal, regional, and local agencies, and the private sector.

The Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route spans over 600 miles from Newport, Rhode Island where French forces under the command of Jean Baptiste Donatien de Viemeur, comte de Rochambeau landed in July 1780, to Yorktown, Virginia where with General George Washington and Continental Army forces, the combined armies forced the surrender of the British Army under General Charles Lord Cornwallis. Historians regard this cooperative endeavor resulting in the Yorktown surrender as one of the most decisive events in bringing the

American Revolution to a successful conclusion. It initiated and has had the long-lasting effect of our continued friendship with the people of France.

After wintering in Newport, Rochambeau's army marched through Rhode Island and Connecticut and joined Washington's army in Phillipsburg, New York. Foregoing an attack on New York City, the two generals decided to attack from the south. In August through September, the armies traversed New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, the future District of Columbia, and Virginia, reaching Williamsburg in late September. A French fleet under Admiral DeGrasse blocked the Chesapeake Bay from British entry and the possible escape of British troops at Yorktown. On October 19, 1781, Cornwallis surrendered his forces to those who had suffered the hardships of rebellion and their allies, and ultimately forged the birth of a nation.

In the summer of 1782, Rochambeau's army marched north to Boston and the bulk of his troops sailed to France on Christmas Eve of that year. In this crucial march south and then victoriously north after Yorktown, American and French troops were warmly greeted and celebrated by the populace. In all, nine future states and the future District of Columbia comprised portions of the route and supported the march, providing ports, roads, campsites, officers' lodging, food provisions and supplies.

The extant resources associated with the marches of 1781 and 1782 are well-documented. Comprehensive historical and architectural surveys have identified 750 known resources directly related to the route and many more in adjacent locations. Many resources found along the Revolutionary Route are National Historic Landmarks or sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places. They include campsites and bivouacs; historic road segments and landscapes; numerous buildings used for accommodations of the troops and meetings; archeological resources; tombstones and grave markers; and, abundant plaques, tablets and statues marking the passage of those, both French and American, who marched to secure a nation's beginning.

The proposed trail links units of the National Park System, national heritage areas, and related resources administered by States, local governments and private organizations that

commemorate the nation's struggle for independence. As one traverses the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route, the places that ring of our nation's revolutionary past come into view from Newport to Hartford; Peekskill to Morristown, Princeton, and Trenton; Philadelphia and Valley Forge to Wilmington and Baltimore; and Mt. Vernon to Williamsburg and Yorktown.

S. 686, if enacted, would provide for administration of the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail by the Secretary of the Interior and, in accordance with provisions of the National Trails System Act, provide for the establishment of a trail advisory council. The Secretary would also consult with Federal agencies, State and local governments and private organizations to develop a comprehensive management plan for the trail. The cost associated with implementation of the plan could be shared by relevant State and local governments and private organizations, which generally helps to limit Federal expenditures for national trails. The Federal cost to administer this national trail is expected to be phased in, eventually reaching approximately \$200,000 to \$400,000 annually.

Our experience during the course of the study for the trail has indicated that there is wide-spread support for designation among affected State and local governments and the many private organizations that participated in our public meetings and closely followed the progress of the study. For example, during the study process, a new nine-State nonprofit 501(c)(3) partnership group, the National Washington Rochambeau Revolutionary Route Association, was formed to support designation of the trail and education of the public on the Revolutionary War. This group could be a key partner in the preservation and interpretation of the route if the trail is designated. We believe that this trail, if designated, will be characterized by significant continued participation by the many governments and organizations along the route.

This concludes my prepared remarks, Mr. Chairman. I will be happy to answer any questions you or other committee members may have regarding this bill.