

116TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. R. 5853

To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to assess the suitability and feasibility of designating certain land as the Great Dismal Swamp National Heritage Area, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 11, 2020

Mr. McEACHIN (for himself, Mr. BUTTERFIELD, Mr. MURPHY of North Carolina, Mr. SCOTT of Virginia, and Mrs. LURIA) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

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## A BILL

To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study to assess the suitability and feasibility of designating certain land as the Great Dismal Swamp National Heritage Area, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Great Dismal Swamp  
5 National Heritage Area Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

7 In this Act:

1           (1) HERITAGE AREA.—The term “Heritage  
2 Area” means the Great Dismal Swamp National  
3 Heritage Area.

4           (2) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means  
5 the Secretary of the Interior.

6           (3) STATES.—The term “States” means the  
7 States of Virginia and North Carolina.

8           (4) STUDY AREA.—The term “study area”  
9 means—

10           (A) the cities of Chesapeake, Norfolk,  
11 Portsmouth, and Suffolk in the State of Vir-  
12 ginia;

13           (B) Isle of Wight County in the State of  
14 Virginia;

15           (C) Camden, Currituck, Gates, and  
16 Pasquotank counties in the State of North  
17 Carolina; and

18           (D) any other areas in the States that—

19           (i) have heritage aspects that are  
20 similar to the areas described in subpara-  
21 graphs (A), (B), or (C); and

22           (ii) are adjacent to, or in the vicinity  
23 of, those areas.

1 **SEC. 3. STUDY.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, in consultation  
3 with State and local organizations and governmental agen-  
4 cies, Tribal governments, non-profit organizations, and  
5 other appropriate entities, shall conduct a study to assess  
6 the suitability and feasibility of designating the study area  
7 as a National Heritage Area, to be known as the “Great  
8 Dismal Swamp National Heritage Area”.

9 (b) REQUIREMENTS.—The study shall include anal-  
10 ysis, documentation, and determinations on whether the  
11 study area—

12 (1) has an assemblage of natural, historic, and  
13 cultural resources that—

14 (A) represent distinctive aspects of the  
15 people and cultures of the United States;

16 (B) are worthy of recognition, conserva-  
17 tion, interpretation, and continuing use; and

18 (C) would be best managed—

19 (i) through partnerships among public  
20 and private entities; and

21 (ii) by linking diverse and sometimes  
22 noncontiguous resources and active com-  
23 munities;

24 (2) reflects traditions, customs, beliefs, and  
25 folklife that are a valuable part of the story of the  
26 United States;

1 (3) provides outstanding opportunities—

2 (A) to conserve natural, historic, cultural,  
3 or scenic features; and

4 (B) for recreation and education;

5 (4) contains resources that—

6 (A) are important to any identified themes  
7 of the study area; and

8 (B) retain a degree of integrity capable of  
9 supporting interpretation;

10 (5) includes residents, business interests, non-  
11 profit organizations, and State, local, and Tribal  
12 governments, and other appropriate entities that—

13 (A) are involved in the planning of the  
14 Heritage Area;

15 (B) have developed a conceptual financial  
16 plan that outlines the roles of all participants in  
17 the Heritage Area, including the Federal Gov-  
18 ernment; and

19 (C) have demonstrated support for the des-  
20 ignation of the Heritage Area;

21 (6) has a potential management entity to work  
22 in partnership with the individuals and entities de-  
23 scribed in paragraph (5) to develop the Heritage  
24 Area while encouraging State and local economic ac-  
25 tivity; and

1           (7) has a conceptual boundary map that is sup-  
2           ported by the public.

3 **SEC. 4. REPORT.**

4           Not later than 3 years after the date on which funds  
5 are first made available to carry out this Act, the Sec-  
6 retary shall submit to the Committee on Natural Re-  
7 sources of the House of Representatives and the Com-  
8 mittee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate  
9 a report that describes—

10           (1) the findings of the study under section 3;

11           and

12           (2) any conclusions and recommendations of the

13           Secretary.

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