



HR0307

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, Long before Lewis and Clark, the Cahokia Mounds region was home to the ancient societies of Mississippian Culture and the beginnings of urbanism in the eastern woodlands; it was from these societies that today's great Indian Nations sprang, with cultural connections from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico and along the mighty Mississippi; the beginnings of this urban civilization was spread over six counties of eastern Missouri and southwestern Illinois; and

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WHEREAS, At the sea of verdure, the fertile American Bottom stretches bluff to bluff at the confluence of America's greatest rivers, the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers, cradling the birth of millennia of agriculture and the rise of the Mississippian Culture; Cahokia Mounds and its mound complexes thrived on the cultivation and trading of corn, with their surplus allowing them to rise and become the "Center of the Universe" of the Mississippian Culture, trading to the north, south, east, and west; and

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WHEREAS, Dating from the Mississippian Period (800-1350 AD), Cahokia Mounds, covering 3,950 acres, is the earliest and largest pre-Columbian archaeological site north of Mexico and the pre-eminent example of a cultural, religious, and economic center of the pre-historic Mississippian cultural tradition;

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1 and

2 WHEREAS, Cahokia Mounds and its ancient non-contiguous
3 satellite settlements are today in need of additional
4 protection to secure the most significant remnants of the
5 largest Native American civilization on the North American
6 continent north of Mexico from active and passive threats; and

7 WHEREAS, Over the last 24 months, with guidance from the
8 Indian Nations, federal agencies, Illinois and Missouri state
9 agencies, and local units of government, Heartlands
10 Conservancy developed a thorough, compelling, and rigorous
11 study that met National Park Service standards and criteria
12 demonstrating the feasibility of elevating the status and
13 national designation of Cahokia Mounds; the surrounding mound
14 complexes in the region and their significance, suitability,
15 and feasibility as a potential formal unit of the National Park
16 Service would ensure that these precious ancient
17 archaeological resources are protected and accessible for all
18 people to experience; and

19 WHEREAS, Conducting 13 public meetings, media interviews,
20 stakeholder meetings, outreach to 13 tribes/nations, and over
21 890 surveys, Heartlands Conservancy received support for the
22 study's recommendations and showed that local communities
23 would benefit from revitalized and protected sites with

1 enhanced interpretive and educational programs to teach about
2 the Mississippian Culture, its ancestral significance, and the
3 numerous associated historic traces and cultural themes; and

4 WHEREAS, The study captured the significance of the region
5 and its ancient history by demonstrating that, through
6 cooperative protection and partnerships, it can remain
7 connected and intact in order to properly interpret remaining
8 sites and offer opportunities to protect, enhance, and
9 interpret the natural environment along the Mounds Heritage
10 Trail corridor; and

11 WHEREAS, National parks generate \$31 billion for local
12 economies each year and are shown to invigorate neighborhood
13 historic renovation and spur business growth; they also provide
14 opportunities for tourism and economic development, natural
15 resource conservation, and improvements of the quality of life
16 for residents of nearby communities; and

17 WHEREAS, There are no other mounds within the National Park
18 Service that represent the Mississippian Culture as
19 holistically and uniquely as the Cahokia Mounds; combined with
20 the surrounding satellite mound centers, Cahokia emerges as the
21 most significant and unsurpassed example of its time period;
22 and

1 WHEREAS, The great region of southwestern Illinois and
2 eastern Missouri will, with the assistance of the Indian
3 Nations, become a center of cultural outreach and enrichment by
4 embracing our nation's earliest heritage and re-engaging our
5 ancient past as a foundation for the 21st century; and

6 WHEREAS, Legislation will be introduced in the U.S.
7 Congress to create the Cahokia Mississippian Culture National
8 Historical Park in Southwestern Illinois, which, with
9 thematically-connected, non-contiguous mound complexes in the
10 St. Louis Metropolitan Region, will recognize the significance
11 of the Mississippian Culture and its unique national
12 significance in agriculture, ancestral ties, and its status as
13 one of America's first cities; and

14 WHEREAS, There is a strong consensus that now is the time
15 for immediate action to further develop the Cahokia Mounds and
16 thematically-connected mound complexes to realize their full
17 potential; with new transportation access across the
18 Mississippi River completed and the rebound of the economy,
19 there is even greater pressure to develop this area; therefore,
20 be it

21 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
22 HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
23 we urge the citizens of the Cahokia Mounds region to actively

1 join the Heartlands Conservancy, the Governor of Illinois, and
2 the Illinois Department of Natural Resources in support of the
3 Cahokia Mounds Mississippian Culture Initiative; and be it
4 further

5 RESOLVED, That we urge the U.S. Congress to elevate the
6 national status of the Cahokia Mounds and
7 thematically-connected mound complexes that are deemed
8 suitable and nationally-significant as a non-contiguous
9 National Historical Park, the Cahokia Mounds Mississippian
10 Cultural National Historical Park; and be it further

11 RESOLVED, That we call upon the President of the United
12 States to exercise his authority by Executive Order through the
13 Antiquities Act of 1906 to designate the Cahokia Mounds as a
14 National Monument, and we call upon Congress to pass
15 legislation creating the Cahokia Mounds Mississippian Cultural
16 National Historical Park in partnership with the State of
17 Illinois; and be it further

18 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
19 delivered to the Governor of Illinois, the Illinois General
20 Assembly, the members of the Illinois Congressional
21 Delegation, the National Park Service Director, the Secretary
22 of the Interior, and President Donald Trump.