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SENATE 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 beginning 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 SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIRST GENERAL  
22 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we urge the citizens of  
23 the Cahokia Mounds region to actively join the Heartlands

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

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

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

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