

**STATEMENT OF KATHERINE H. STEVENSON, ACTING ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, BUSINESS SERVICES, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES, ON S. 1148, A BILL TO ESTABLISH THE CHAMPLAIN QUADRICENTENNIAL COMMEMORATION COMMISSION AND THE HUDSON-FULTON 400<sup>TH</sup> COMMEMORATION COMMISSION, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.**

**July 12, 2007**

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Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to present the views of the Department of the Interior on S. 1148, a bill to provide for the establishment of the Champlain Quadricentennial Commemoration Commission and the Hudson-Fulton 400<sup>th</sup> Commemoration Commission.

The Department supports this bill. The Department of Justice has advised us that it has constitutional concerns about certain appointment provisions in sections 102(b) and 202(b) of the bill and will transmit amendments at a later date to resolve these concerns.

S. 1148 provides for the establishment of two separate commissions to undertake activities celebrating the contributions of Samuel de Champlain, and those of Henry Hudson and Robert Fulton to the history of our nation. The French explorer, Samuel de Champlain, was the first European to discover and explore what is now called Lake Champlain in 1609. Henry Hudson, as the master of the vessel Half Moon, was the first European to sail up the river that now bears his name, also in 1609. In 1807, Robert Fulton navigated up the same river between New York City and Albany in the steamboat

Claremont, revolutionizing the method of waterborne transportation and influencing forever commerce, the world's navies, and transoceanic travel and trade.

Title I would establish the Champlain Quadricentennial Commemoration Commission, composed of 11 members, who would be appointed by the Secretary of the Interior. Four of the members would be from among individuals serving on the Hudson-Fulton-Champlain Commission of the State of New York and residents of the Champlain Valley, and four members would be from among individuals serving on the Champlain Quadricentennial Commission of the State of Vermont and residents of Vermont.

Title II would establish the Hudson-Fulton 400<sup>th</sup> Commemoration Commission, composed of 16 members, would be appointed by the Secretary, six of whom would be after consideration of nominations from members of the House of Representatives whose districts encompass the Hudson River Valley, two after consideration of nominations submitted by members of the U.S. Senate from the State of New York, and two after consideration of the recommendations of the Mayor of the City of New York and consultation with members of the House of Representatives whose districts encompass the City of New York.

The duties of the respective Commissions are to plan, develop, and execute appropriate commemorative actions, coordinate with federal and state entities, promote scholarly research, and encourage a wide range of organizations to participate in activities and expand understanding and appreciation of the significance of the voyages of these three

men. They are granted broad powers to accomplish these tasks. Both are also to coordinate their respective efforts with each other to ensure that the commemorations conducted pursuant to the legislation are consistent with the plans of the commemorative commissions established by the States of New York and Vermont.

The bill provides annual funding authorizations of \$500,000 for each commission to be available until expended. Specific allocations of funds to be expended by the commissions are also included. The Champlain Commission's authorized appropriations between fiscal years 2008 and 2011 shall be expended with 45% going to activities in New York; 45% for activities in Vermont; and 10% for other activities in accordance with purposes of the legislation. The Commission will terminate on December 31, 2010. The Hudson-Fulton Commission's authorized appropriations, also between fiscal year 2008 and 2011, shall be expended with 80% for activities in the Hudson River Valley; 10% for activities in the City of New York; and 10% for other activities in accordance with the purposes of the legislation. This Commission will also terminate on December 31, 2010.

Both commissions are authorized to solicit, accept, use, and dispose of gifts, bequests, or devises of real money or other real or personal property for use in aiding or facilitating their work. Both are also authorized to appoint advisory committees as they determine necessary for carrying out the purposes of the legislation.

Back in the 108<sup>th</sup> Congress, the Department testified on a similar bill to establish the Hudson-Fulton-Champlain Commission. During that hearing, the Department raised three concerns we had with the bill. First, we were concerned about size of the commission that numbered 31 members. Second, we recommended that the bill clearly state that the commission was authorized to accept monetary donations to accomplish its purposes. And third, we recommended that the authorization of appropriations to the commission be capped. S. 1148 integrates all three of our recommended amendments.

The persons and events associated with the explorations of Lake Champlain and the Hudson River, and the inauguration of steam powered water-borne transportation form significant elements in our nation's history. As we commemorate the contributions of Samuel de Champlain, Henry Hudson and Robert Fulton, citizens of the United States and those abroad will come to have a better understanding of their impacts on early exploration, navigation, our national heritage, and the development of the United States.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my testimony. I would be pleased to answer any questions you or other members of the committee may have.