

SENATE, No. 2355

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

221st LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JANUARY 29, 2024

Sponsored by:

Senator SHIRLEY K. TURNER

District 15 (Hunterdon and Mercer)

SYNOPSIS

Establishes “Revolutionary War Park Study Commission.”

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 AN ACT establishing the “Revolutionary War Park Study
2 Commission.”

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4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
5 *of New Jersey:*

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7 1. a. As the 250th anniversary of the United States approaches,
8 along with the anniversaries of the crucial battles of Trenton and
9 Princeton that helped secure the American Revolution, there is
10 established the “Revolutionary War Park Study Commission.” The
11 purpose of the commission shall be to evaluate the feasibility of
12 forming a National Historical Park that would include the existing
13 Washington Crossing State Park, Trenton Battle Monument, and
14 Princeton Battlefield State Park, and to evaluate the impact,
15 including the advantages and disadvantages, of creating a National
16 Historical Park.

17 b. The commission shall consist of nine members as follows:

18 (1) the Commissioner of Environmental Protection, ex officio,
19 or a designee;

20 (2) two members of the Senate to be appointed by the President
21 of the Senate, which members shall not be of the same political
22 party;

23 (3) two members of the General Assembly to be appointed by
24 the Speaker of the General Assembly, which members shall not be
25 of the same political party;

26 (4) the Executive Director of the New Jersey Historical
27 Commission, ex officio, or a designee; and

28 (5) three public members appointed by the Governor, with
29 expertise in a field essential to preserving historical resources, such
30 as, but not limited to, history, architecture, planning, engineering,
31 and archaeology.

32 c. Appointments to the commission shall be made within 60
33 days following the effective date of this act. The commission shall
34 organize as soon as practicable after the appointment of its
35 members, and shall select a chairperson from among its
36 membership, and a secretary who need not be a member of the
37 commission.

38 d. A majority of the commission shall constitute a quorum.
39 The commission may conduct business without a quorum, but may
40 only vote on recommendations when a quorum is present. The
41 commission shall meet at the call of its chairperson, at the times and
42 in the places the chairperson may deem appropriate and necessary
43 to effectuate the commission’s duties, and it may conduct public
44 hearings at such place or places as the chairperson designates.

45 e. Vacancies in the membership of the commission shall be
46 filled in the same manner in which the original appointment was
47 made.

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1 f. Members of the commission shall serve without
2 compensation, but shall be reimbursed for necessary and reasonable
3 expenses incurred in the performance of their duties as members of
4 the commission within the limits of funds appropriated or otherwise
5 made available to the commission for its purposes.

6 g. The commission shall be entitled to call to its assistance and
7 avail itself of the services of the officials and employees of the
8 State and its political subdivisions and their departments, boards,
9 bureaus, commissions, and agencies as it may require and as may be
10 available to it for the purposes of the commission. The Department
11 of Environmental Protection shall provide staff support services to
12 the commission.

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14 2. a. The “Revolutionary War Park Study Commission” shall
15 evaluate:

16 (1) the feasibility of establishing a National Historical Park by
17 taking into consideration (a) any federal requirements, (b) the
18 distance between the parks, (c) differences in park management,
19 and (d) any other potential issues that may arise when establishing a
20 National Historical Park;

21 (2) solutions to mitigate potential issues arising from the
22 establishment of a National Historical Park; and

23 (3) the impact, advantages, and disadvantages of creating a
24 National Historical Park, including:

25 (a) the impact of creating a National Historical Park on the
26 preservation of historical and ecological resources located within
27 the parks, such as buildings, scenery, historical objects, landmarks,
28 and wildlife;

29 (b) the impact of creating a National Historical Park on
30 neighboring communities and businesses, including the potential
31 effects of additional visitors to certain areas of the State, in
32 particular during the years surrounding the 250th anniversary of the
33 founding of the United States of America;

34 (c) the impact of converting State or private lands to federal
35 parkland;

36 (d) the impact of creating a National Historical Park on local tax
37 revenue, and on total State tourism revenue; and

38 (e) any additional potential impacts, advantages, and
39 disadvantages that the commission chooses to discuss.

40 b. The commission shall issue a final report of its findings and
41 conclusions to the Governor and, pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991,
42 c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), to the Legislature no later than one year
43 following the first meeting of the commission.

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45 3. This act shall take effect immediately and shall expire upon
46 the submission by the commission of its report pursuant to section 2
47 of this act.

STATEMENT

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This bill would establish the “Revolutionary War Park Study Commission” to evaluate the feasibility of forming a National Historical Park that would include the existing Washington Crossing State Park, Trenton Battle Monument, and Princeton Battlefield State Park. The commission would consist of nine members: the Commissioner of Environmental Protection; two members of the Senate to be appointed by the President of the Senate; two members of the General Assembly to be appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly; the Executive Director of the New Jersey Historical Commission; and three public members appointed by the Governor, all of whom would be required to have expertise in a field essential to preserving historical resources.

- The commission would evaluate:
- (1) the feasibility of establishing a National Historical Park;
 - (2) the impact, advantages, and disadvantages of creating a National Historical Park; and
 - (3) solutions to mitigate any potential issues arising from the establishment of a National Historical Park.

The commission would issue a final report of its findings and conclusions to the Governor and the Legislature no later than one year following the first meeting of the commission. The commission would expire upon the submission of the commission’s report.