

113TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3222

To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of sites associated with the 1657 signing of the Flushing Remonstrance in Queens, New York, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 30, 2013

Ms. MENG introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

A BILL

To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resource study of sites associated with the 1657 signing of the Flushing Remonstrance in Queens, New York, 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 “Flushing Remon-
5 strance Study Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) Dutch involvement in North America start-
2 ed with Henry Hudson’s 1609 voyage on the ship,
3 Half Moon, employed by the Dutch East India Com-
4 pany.

5 (2) After 1640, New Netherland gradually
6 began to transform from a chain of trading posts
7 into a settlement colony.

8 (3) As Dutch and English settlers moved closer
9 to one another, they began to assimilate in what
10 would later become Queens County.

11 (4) The Dutch and English settlements had not
12 been without conflict. Although the Dutch Republic
13 was well known for its toleration of other faiths, Di-
14 rector General Peter Stuyvesant and his council
15 thought that liberty of worship should not be grant-
16 ed to Quakers.

17 (5) When Quakers began to arrive in Flushing,
18 the colonial government issued an ordinance that
19 formally banned the practice of all religions outside
20 of the Dutch Reformed Church.

21 (6) On December 27, 1657, 30 Flushing resi-
22 dents signed what was later called the Flushing Re-
23 monstrance, objecting to this order. None of the
24 remonstrance’s authors were Quakers.

1 (7) Dutch colonial authorities proceeded to ar-
2 rest the signers of the Flushing Remonstrance. In
3 1662, John Bowne defied the ban and allowed
4 Quakers to hold services in his house. Bowne was
5 fined and banished to the Dutch Republic for show-
6 ing contempt for secular authority.

7 (8) Bowne was later exonerated after appealing
8 to the guarantees of religious liberty before the
9 Dutch West India Company and returned to Flush-
10 ing in 1664. The colony later fell to British control
11 on September 24, 1664.

12 (9) The Flushing Remonstrance is now consid-
13 ered by many to be instrumental in the development
14 of religious liberty in the United States and a pre-
15 cursor to the First Amendment to the United States
16 Constitution.

17 (10) In 1957, the United States Postal Service
18 released a 3-cent postage stamp commemorating the
19 300th Anniversary of the signing of the Flushing
20 Remonstrance which read, “Religious Freedom in
21 America”.

22 (11) Queens remained rural and agricultural
23 through the 18th and 19th Centuries. Although its
24 Dutch identity diminished, the tolerance of diversity
25 that has harbored Quakers and other religious sects

1 in the Dutch Colonial period continues to this day.
2 Queens is the most ethnically diverse urban area in
3 the world, with a population of over 2,200,000 rep-
4 resenting over 100 different nations and speaking
5 over 138 different languages.

6 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

7 As used in this Act:

8 (1) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
9 the Secretary of the Interior.

10 (2) STUDY AREA.—The term “study area”
11 means the John Bowne House located at 3701
12 Bowne Street, Queens, New York, the Friends Meet-
13 ing House located at 137–17 Northern Boulevard,
14 Queens, New York, and other resources in the vicin-
15 ity of Flushing related to the history of religious
16 freedom during the era of the signing of the Flush-
17 ing Remonstrance.

18 **SEC. 4. SPECIAL RESOURCE STUDY.**

19 (a) STUDY.—The Secretary shall conduct a special
20 resource study of the study area.

21 (b) CONTENTS.—In conducting the study under sub-
22 section (a), the Secretary shall—

23 (1) evaluate the national significance of the
24 study area’s resources based on their relationship to

1 the history of religious freedom associated with the
2 signing of the Flushing Remonstrance;

3 (2) determine the suitability and feasibility of
4 designating resources within the study area as a unit
5 of the National Park System;

6 (3) consider other alternatives for preservation,
7 protection, and interpretation of the study area by
8 Federal, State, or local governmental entities, or pri-
9 vate and nonprofit organizations;

10 (4) identify properties related to the John
11 Bowne House that could potentially meet criteria for
12 designation as a National Historic Landmark;

13 (5) consult with interested Federal, State, or
14 local governmental entities, private and nonprofit or-
15 ganizations, or any other interested individuals;

16 (6) evaluate the impact of the proposed action
17 on the flow of commerce and commercial activity,
18 job opportunities, and any adverse economic effects
19 that could not be avoided if the proposal is imple-
20 mented; and

21 (7) identify cost estimates for any Federal ac-
22 quisition, development, interpretation, operation, and
23 maintenance associated with the alternatives.

24 (c) APPLICABLE LAW.—The study required under
25 subsection (a) shall be conducted in accordance with sec-

1 tion 8 of National Park Service General Authorities Act
2 (16 U.S.C. 1a-5).

3 (d) REPORT.—Not later than 3 years after the date
4 on which funds are first made available for the study
5 under subsection (a), the Secretary shall submit to the
6 Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Rep-
7 resentatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural
8 Resources of the Senate a report containing the results
9 of the study and any conclusions and recommendations of
10 the Secretary.

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