

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2369

To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study of alternatives for commemorating Long Island’s aviation history, including a determination of the suitability and feasibility of designating parts of the study area as a unit of the National Park System, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 25, 2019

Miss RICE of New York (for herself, Ms. MENG, Mr. ZELDIN, Mr. SUOZZI, Mr. KING of New York, and Mr. MEEKS) 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 study of alternatives for commemorating Long Island’s aviation history, including a determination of the suitability and feasibility of designating parts of the study area as a unit of the National Park System, 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 “Long Island Aviation
5 History Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 The Congress finds the following:

3 (1) Long Island has played an indispensable
4 role in the development of the aviation industry in
5 the United States. In particular, the Hempstead
6 Plains, Suffolk County Air Force Base, and parts of
7 Bethpage, Port Washington, and Farmingdale con-
8 tain notable landmarks of aviation history.

9 (2) The Hempstead Plains encompass approxi-
10 mately 950 acres east of Clinton Road and south of
11 Old Country Road in Garden City, New York, and
12 have been called the “Cradle of Aviation”.

13 (3) In the early 20th century, the Hempstead
14 Plains had 3 major airfields, all of great historical
15 significance: Roosevelt Field, Curtiss Field, and
16 Mitchel Field.

17 (4) During World War I, the airfields of Hemp-
18 stead Plains were an important training center for
19 United States military pilots, as well as a major hub
20 for military aircraft research, development, and pro-
21 duction.

22 (5) The first transatlantic flight, carried out by
23 the U.S. Navy Curtiss NC-4 in 1919, took off from
24 Rockaway, New York, and cemented the United
25 States leading role in aviation innovation. This air-

1 craft was built at the Curtiss factory in Garden
2 City—a building which still stands.

3 (6) Roosevelt Field in Garden City, New York,
4 was the point of departure for Charles Lindbergh’s
5 famous transatlantic flight aboard the Spirit of St.
6 Louis completed on May 20, 1927.

7 (7) In 1929, Amelia Earhart and other pio-
8 neering women pilots founded the International Or-
9 ganization of Women Pilots, or the Ninety-Nines, at
10 Curtiss Field.

11 (8) Curtiss Field also served as the terminus
12 for transcontinental airmail from 1918–1929.

13 (9) In the 1930s, Roosevelt Field was the busi-
14 est civilian airfield in the United States, and played
15 a role in many other historic transcontinental, trans-
16 atlantic, and record-setting flights.

17 (10) Port Washington, New York, once known
18 as the “Plymouth Rock” of American aviation, was
19 Pan American World Airways’ trans-Atlantic hub on
20 Manhasset Isle from 1934 to 1940.

21 (11) During World War II, Long Island was a
22 crucial center of military aircraft production. These
23 aircraft, produced in huge numbers for the Army,
24 Navy, and foreign governments, were of excellent

1 quality and had a major impact on the course of the
2 war in all theaters.

3 (12) Most notably, the Grumman Aircraft Com-
4 pany, based in Bethpage, New York, and the Repub-
5 lic Aviation Corporation, based in Farmingdale, New
6 York, manufactured innovative planes that proved
7 highly valuable to the U.S. military such as Grum-
8 man's F6F-3 Hellcat and Republic's P-47 Thun-
9 derbolt.

10 (13) Mitchel Air Force Base, located on the
11 Hempstead Plains, served as the original location of
12 the Air Defense Command upon its inception in
13 1940, and was integral to the defense of the main-
14 land United States during World War II and there-
15 after.

16 (14) In 1951, the Suffolk County Air Force
17 Base, located in Westhampton, New York, became
18 the prime Air Defense Command base responsible
19 for defending the New York City metropolitan area
20 from all air attacks.

21 (15) In 1962, Grumman won the contract to
22 build the Lunar Module as part of the Apollo Pro-
23 gram, and in 1969 the first men traveled to the
24 moon aboard a spacecraft built with the expertise of
25 Long Island's aviation industry.

1 **SEC. 3. SPECIAL RESOURCE STUDY.**

2 (a) STUDY.—The Secretary of the Interior shall con-
3 duct a special resource study of the study area.

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

6 (1) evaluate the national significance of the
7 study area based on an assessment of Long Island’s
8 aviation history;

9 (2) determine the suitability and feasibility of
10 designating parts of the study area as a unit of the
11 National Park System commemorating Long Is-
12 land’s aviation history;

13 (3) consider other alternatives for preservation,
14 protection, and interpretation of the study area by
15 Federal, State, or local governmental entities, or pri-
16 vate and nonprofit organizations;

17 (4) identify properties related to Long Island’s
18 aviation history that could meet criteria for listing in
19 the National Register of Historic Places or criteria
20 for designation as National Historic Landmarks;

21 (5) consult with interested Federal, State, or
22 local governmental entities, private and nonprofit or-
23 ganizations, or any other interested individuals;

24 (6) consider the appropriate management op-
25 tions needed to ensure the protection, preservation,
26 and interpretation of the study area;

1 (7) evaluate appropriate ways to enhance his-
2 torical research, education, interpretation, and pub-
3 lic awareness of Long Island’s aviation history; and
4 (8) identify cost estimates for any Federal ac-
5 quisition, development, interpretation, operation, and
6 maintenance associated with the alternatives.

7 (c) STUDY AREA.—The term “study area” means
8 Long Island with a particular focus on the Hempstead
9 Plains, the areas surrounding Suffolk County Air Force
10 Base, the hamlet of Bethpage, the hamlet of Port Wash-
11 ington, and the village of Farmingdale.

12 (d) APPLICABLE LAW.—The study required under
13 subsection (a) shall be conducted in accordance with sec-
14 tion 100507 of title 54, United States Code.

15 (e) REPORT.—Not later than 3 years after the date
16 on which funds are first made available for the study
17 under subsection (a), the Secretary shall submit to the
18 Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Rep-
19 resentatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural
20 Resources of the Senate a report containing the results
21 of the study and any conclusions and recommendations of
22 the Secretary.

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