



February 12, 2010

Senator Frank R. Lautenberg
United States Senate
324 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-3003

Senator Robert Menendez
528 Senate Hart Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Congressman Frank LoBiondo
2427 Rayburn Hart Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senators Lautenberg and Menendez and Congressman LoBiondo:

The South Jersey Bayshore Coalition is pleased to inform you that the South Jersey Main Street Organization has joined our ongoing effort to gain recognition of the South Jersey Delaware Bayshore as a National Heritage Area. National Heritage Area designation would geographically demarcate an area rich in cultural, historic, agricultural, marine, and natural resources along New Jersey's Delaware Bay. There are no property regulations attached to National Heritage Areas, in fact they provide valuable economic development through national recognition, additional tourism, the promotion of resource protection and educational interpretation.

We understand you are actively considering appropriation and authorization bills that would allow us to conduct a Feasibility Study of a National Heritage Area for the region, which is a vital next step in this process. We are extremely grateful for your efforts. Local input is an integral part of this Study, which will entail a significant public outreach process. The *Reconnaissance Study: New Jersey Shore of the Delaware Bay* /National Park Service, May 2001 reported that: ".....a heritage area approach could provide residents and community leaders in the region a viable option for collaboration on resource conservation, interpretation and

promotion.” The efforts of the South Jersey Bayshore Coalition, the South Jersey Main Street Organization and others have created a groundswell of support for the proposed NHA, which will translate into a public outreach program of a magnitude never before seen in this region.

Enclosed is a copy of the submitted Appropriation form and links to general information and the existing Schuylkill River NHA. The Schuylkill NHA is an outstanding example of what a NHA can do for a region.

Thank you for your continued support, and please feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

Respectfully yours,

Sandy Batty, Executive Director
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<http://www.nps.gov/history/heritageareas/> National Heritage Area/National Park Service
<http://www.schuylkillriver.org/> Schuylkill River National & State Heritage Area
<http://sjbayshore.org/> South Jersey Bayshore Coalition

South Jersey Bayshore

National Heritage Area

ABSTRACT

The South Jersey Bayshore is an area of special beauty, exceptional natural resources of national and international significance, habitat for endangered and threatened species, thriving fishing and farming industries, and nationally significant historic and cultural resources.

The South Jersey Bayshore Coalition (SJBC) is a formal gathering of 20 non-profit groups working in the area, along with informal participants. The Coalition's mission is to preserve the cultural heritage and environmental integrity of the South Jersey Bayshore. SJBC is interested in pursuing National Heritage Area designation for the Delaware Bay watershed in New Jersey that would include portions of Gloucester, Salem, Cumberland, and Cape May Counties. SJBC has joined with other organizations, namely the South Jersey Main Street Association and Rutgers Jacques Cousteau National Estuarine Research Reserve to pursue this endeavor.

A National Heritage Area is a place designated by Congress where natural, cultural, historic and scenic resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally distinctive landscape arising from patterns of human activity shaped by geography. These patterns make National Heritage Areas representative of the national experience through the physical features that remain and the traditions that have evolved in them. Continued use of National Heritage Areas by people whose traditions helped to shape the landscapes enhances their significance. An NHA has the potential of benefits to a region in the following areas: Natural Resource Conservation, Heritage Tourism, Stewardship Building, Strategic Engagement, Education/Interpretation, Historic Preservation, Community Revitalization, Economic Development, Cultural Conservation, Historic Preservation and Recreation.

Fiscal year 2011 Appropriation Request Form

SUBMITTING INSTITUTION

Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions for the South Jersey Bayshore Coalition
PO Box 157
Mendham, NJ 07945

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

NAME OF PROJECT

National Heritage Area Feasibility Study for the South Jersey Bayshore

This request is out institution's # 1 priority

PURPOSE

To fund a feasibility study for designation of the South Jersey Bayshore as a National Heritage Area.

DESCRIPTION

Preliminary studies have shown the South Jersey Bayshore's natural, historic and agricultural resources to be nationally significant. A large coalition of environmental, historic and cultural organizations has made it a priority to determine the feasibility of including the Bayshore in the National Heritage Area Program in view of the economic and societal benefits inherent in such a designation.

WHO WILL THE PROJECT BENEFIT?

Residents of Cape May, Cumberland, Salem & Gloucester counties would benefit from a heightened sense of community, the ability to preserve significant landscapes for future generations and a stimulus for economic growth through environmental & agricultural tourism.

HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL IT SERVE?

National Heritage Area designation would serve the 600,000 year-round population as well as millions of visitors from the tri-state area and beyond.

HOW MANY NEW JOBS WILL THIS CREATE, IF ANY?

Local businesses will profit from NHA designation through expanded tourism. Note that Salem County currently generates the smallest return on tourism of all 21 New Jersey counties.

JUSTIFICATION

National Heritage Area designation would support expanded tourism and economic development in an area resplendent with farm fields, protected open space, historic cities and villages, acres of meadows and bay fisheries. National recognition of this area is important for the promotion of the natural and cultural resources and a potential economic return for residents. As the two poorest counties, Salem and Cumberland counties would particularly benefit.

LOCATION OF THE PROJECT

The project is located in those Delaware Bay watershed lands of Gloucester, Salem, Cumberland and Cape May counties. Please see the South Jersey Bayshore Coalition map at:

www.anjec.org/pdfs/sjbayshore.pdf

FUNDING

300,000

HOW WILL FUNDING BE USED?

Design/Study The Coalition, via ANJEC, would engage the National Park Service, or another qualified planning organization if the Park Service is not available, to conduct an official Feasibility Study. The bulk of the funds would go to the National Park Service, with a small amount paid to ANJEC to oversee the project.

What is the minimum amount needed to move the project forward?

Total Feasibility Study costs are estimated at \$300,000. An initial allocation of \$150,000 - \$200,000 could initiate the project.

What is the project's total cost?

\$300,000

Please list ALL anticipated sources of funding.

Private Entities: ANJEC intends to seek partial funding from private foundations, should the study be authorized. One foundation has indicated its willingness to consider a proposal.

Applicable Appropriations Bill

Interior/Environment

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions

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HAVE YOU REQUESTED WITH ANY HOUSE MEMBERS?

Congressman Frank LoBiondo

Dana Richter 202-225-6572