

**A RESOLUTION IN RESPONSE TO A PROPOSAL TO CHANGE THE DESIGNATION
OF THE
DELAWARE WATER GAP NATIONAL RECREATION AREA
TO THE
DELAWARE RIVER NATIONAL PARK AND LENAPE PRESERVE
R-35-22**

WHEREAS, the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area was established by an Act of Congress in 1965; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor and Township Committee of the Township of Walpack are aware of a plan currently being proposed by the New Jersey and Pennsylvania Chapters of the Sierra Club seeking to change the designation of the “Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area” to the “Delaware River National Park and Lenape Preserve” (“Delaware Water Gap: Redesignation Project”); and

WHEREAS, a similar plan to change the designation of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area to a National Park and Preserve was proposed in the 2016 National Park Service plan entitled “Vision 2030: A Vision For a Sustainable Future”; and

WHEREAS, the above mentioned National Park Service plan entitled “Vision 2030: A Vision For a Sustainable Future” was considered by stakeholders in 2016, and later shelved in consideration of numerous concerns for its potential impacts; and

WHEREAS, any such redesignation plan would require extensive, and expensive, preliminary studies to determine if such a change in designation would be warranted; and

WHEREAS, the sole power to fund and authorize such requisite preliminary studies by the National Park Service evaluating and making recommendations regarding the proposed change in designation rests with the Congress of the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, the sole power to fund and authorize any proposed change in designation in response to a positive recommendation from the National Park Service as a result of such requisite preliminary studies rests with the Congress of the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, any such change in designation is likely to result in significant impacts on numerous municipalities and their residents and businesses both within, and surrounding the current National Recreation Area; and

WHEREAS, such impacts are likely to include, but not be limited to, potential acquisition of private property, potential impacts on, and changes in, public lands currently under the jurisdiction of other entities (i.e. State Parks, etc.), potential reduction in the area of lands currently available for hunting, anticipation of significantly increased vehicular traffic, and other general environmental, economic, social, agricultural impacts and general welfare concerns; and

WHEREAS, the evaluation of such potential impacts requires the development of a detailed proposed plan providing all applicable data including, but not limited to, required funding (requirements and funding plans), precise proposed Park boundaries, areas of proposed acquisition of private lands, any and all proposed changes to public lands currently under the jurisdiction of other entities (i.e. State Parks, etc.) and areas in which hunting will be permitted, as well as anticipated visitor traffic impacts (and its effects on existing infrastructure, along with the creating of the need for additional infrastructure and support services) and other environmental, economic and agricultural impacts; and

WHEREAS, the residents of Walpack Township and numerous other municipalities within and surrounding the current National Recreation Area have, for decades, experienced significant ongoing negative impacts as a result of previous plans presented to and approved by the Congress of the United States of America; specifically, the Army Corps of Engineers Tocks Island Dam project; and

WHEREAS, depending on the specifics of any such redesignation plan, the Township of Walpack might, as a result of private property acquisition, or other proposed impacts, be effectively eliminated as a municipality, in spite of its status as the oldest township in Sussex County, having originally been formed in 1731;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Mayor and Township Committee of the Township of Walpack call upon the Congress of the United States of America, and specifically those members representing the areas of New Jersey, Pennsylvania and New York within and surrounding the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, to commit themselves to, and publicly declare by way of response to this resolution that, no such change in designation will be funded and authorized unless, and until:

1. Congress first determines that the funding and authorization of the requisite preliminary studies to determine if such a change in designation is warranted and is in the best interest of the residents within and surrounding the current National Recreation Area; and
2. Congress is provided with an affirmative and detailed recommendation from the National Park Service made as a result of such studies, including a specific plan including data documenting funding required for both the initial establishment and ongoing maintenance of the proposed National Park boundaries, policies and impacts as described above; and
3. Congress makes publicly available such a plan and actively solicits through multiple venues and appropriately considers input, both pro and con, from the public within and surrounding the proposed National Park including, but not limited to counties, municipalities, other local governing entities, public interest groups and clubs and residents at large who will be impacted by such a change in designation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Mayor and Committee of the Township of Walpack, in the County of Sussex, and State of New Jersey, request that copies of this resolution be sent to Governor Phil Murphy; U.S. Senator Robert Menedez, U.S. Senator Cory Booker; Congressman Josh Gottheimer; Congresswoman Mikie Sherrill; Congressman David Norcross; Congressman Jefferson Van Drew; Congressman Christopher Smith, Congressman Frank Pallone, Jr.; Congressman Tom Malinowski; Congressman Albio Sires; Congressman Bill Pascarell, Jr.; Congressman Donald Payne, Jr.; Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman; New Jersey Senator Steven V. Oroho; New Jersey Assemblyman F. Parker Space; New Jersey Assemblyman Harold Wirths; New Jersey Senator Michael Doherty; Assemblyman John DeMaio; Assemblyman Eric Petersen; Congresswoman Susan Wild (PA); Congressman Matt Cartright (PA); U.S. Senator Patrick Toomey; U.S. Senator Bob Casey; Sussex County Board of County Commissioners; Warren County Board of Commissioners; and all municipalities of Sussex County.

Mayor Victor J. Maglio

CERTIFICATION

I, Christine M. Von Oesen, Township Clerk of the Township of Walpack, hereby certify that the above Resolution was approved by the Mayor and Township Committee of the Township of Walpack at a meeting held on August 30, 2022.

Christine M. Von Oesen, RMC
Walpack Township Clerk