

110TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 214

To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to study the suitability and feasibility of designating Oak Point and North Brother Island in the Bronx in the State of New York as a unit of the National Park System.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 4, 2007

Mr. SERRANO (for himself, Mr. HINCHEY, and Mrs. MALONEY of New York) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

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## A BILL

To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to study the suitability and feasibility of designating Oak Point and North Brother Island in the Bronx in the State of New York as a unit of the National Park System.

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. OAK POINT AND NORTH BROTHER ISLAND**  
4       **STUDY.**

5       (a) **SHORT TITLE.**—This Act may be cited as the  
6       “General Slocum Memorial Study Act”.

7       (b) **FINDINGS.**—Congress finds as follows:

1           (1) The Area would commemorate the June 15,  
2           1904, catastrophic fire aboard the General Slocum  
3           steamship, which resulted in the deaths of more  
4           than 1,000 people, most of them German immi-  
5           grants and their children.

6           (2) At the time of this tragedy, there was a vi-  
7           brant German neighborhood, known as  
8           “Kleindeutschland” or “Little Germany”, located on  
9           the Lower East Side in New York City.

10          (3) Among the churches in Kleindeutschland,  
11          St. Mark’s Lutheran Evangelical Church on East  
12          6th Street, held an annual outing to celebrate the  
13          end of the Sunday school year for neighborhood chil-  
14          dren and their families. On June 15, 1904, more  
15          than 1,300 people boarded the General Slocum for  
16          the annual excursion which was a trip to Locust  
17          Grove on Long Island Sound.

18          (4) Nearly everyone in the neighborhood knew  
19          someone who died in the ensuing fire or who per-  
20          ished in the treacherous waters of the East River  
21          near Hell Gate. Many lost their entire families.  
22          While most passengers were German, victims and  
23          rescuers also included African-Americans, and Jew-  
24          ish, Irish, and Italian immigrants.

1           (5) The Slocum tragedy also resulted in the  
2           devastation of a lively, bustling, and prosperous  
3           lower East Side community. Kleindeutschland dis-  
4           appeared forever as its residents fled the reminders  
5           of their great losses. Germans left in record numbers  
6           and were soon replaced by a new wave of immi-  
7           grants. The 1910 census showed only a few German  
8           families remained in Kleindeutschland.

9           (6) In the wake of the Slocum disaster, mari-  
10          time safety standards were considerably tightened -  
11          one of the doomed ship's legacies.

12          (7) The study area marks the location where  
13          the greatest loss of life occurred in this, the most  
14          deadly peacetime maritime disaster in American his-  
15          tory. North Brother Island is where the General Slo-  
16          cum beached and Oak Point is where rescuers as-  
17          sembled and hundreds of bodies were brought  
18          ashore.

19          (c) DEFINITIONS.—In this Act:

20           (1) AREA.—The term “Area” means in Bronx  
21           County, New York, the shoreline of the area roughly  
22           bounded by 149th Street on the west and Oak Point  
23           Rail Yard spurs on the east. It also includes North  
24           Brother Island.

1           (2) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means  
2 the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Di-  
3 rector of the National Park Service.

4 (d) STUDY.—

5           (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall conduct  
6 a study of the Area to evaluate the national signifi-  
7 cance of the Area and suitability and feasibility of  
8 designating the Area as a unit of the National Park  
9 System.

10          (2) CRITERIA.—In conducting the study re-  
11 quired by paragraph (1), the Secretary shall use the  
12 criteria for the study of areas for potential inclusion  
13 in the National Park System in section 8(c) of Pub-  
14 lic Law 91–383 (16 U.S.C. 1a–5(c)) .

15          (3) CONTENTS.—The study required by para-  
16 graph (1) shall—

17               (A) determine the suitability and feasibility  
18 of designating the Area as a unit of the Na-  
19 tional Park System;

20               (B) include cost estimates for any nec-  
21 essary acquisition, development, operation, and  
22 maintenance of the Area; and

23               (C) identify alternatives for the manage-  
24 ment, administration, and protection of the  
25 Area.

1 (e) REPORT.—Section 8(c) of Public Law 91–383 (16  
2 U.S.C. 1a–5(c)) shall apply to the conduct of the study  
3 required by this section, except that the study shall be sub-  
4 mitted to the Committee on Resources of the House of  
5 Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Nat-  
6 ural Resources of the Senate not later than 18 months  
7 after the date on which funds are first made available for  
8 the study.

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