

Murphy's MMM Trail Protection Bill Approved

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - After a year of advocating on behalf of central Connecticut's Metacomet Monadnock Mattabesett (MMM) Trail in Washington, today Congressman Chris Murphy (CT-5) led the charge for approval of the legislation to designate it as a "National Scenic Trail". The House of Representatives passed HR 1528, which names the MMM Trail as only the ninth scenic trail designated in the 40-year history of National Trails System, by a vote of 261-122.

"This is a great day for the people of Connecticut, who care deeply about preserving the last tracts of open lands in their neighborhoods. This treasured trail runs right through the heart of some of Connecticut's most populous areas, from the Farmington Valley through the bustling towns of Meriden and New Britain, and it provides a recreational outlet for families all along the way," said Murphy.

HR 1528, the New England National Scenic Trail Designation Act, would provide an opportunity for long term viability of the trail by protecting against increasing pressures from residential subdivision growth.

Two million people live within ten miles of the trail and thousands of Connecticut residents enjoy the recreational opportunities provided by it. Currently, the entire system is predominantly managed and maintained by volunteers, and much of it relies on the generosity and commitment of landowners who voluntarily allow it to cross their lands.

"The hundreds of thousands of Connecticut residents who have enjoyed the MMM Trail over the last half-century will be joined by scores of new visitors coming to enjoy its breathtaking beauty. And those who have enjoyed the MMM Trail in the past can now be assured that the trail will be protected for future generations, while ensuring the trail is actively maintained and care for," said Murphy.

"It's thrilling to me to think that this beautiful trail, one that I

hiked as a child with my father, could become a National Scenic Trail. I recall dangling my legs off the rocks on Mt. Pisgah in Durham, while my father pointed out the gold building in far-off Hartford, gleaming in the distance. It is so inspiring to think that this trail, in my home community, merits national status and recognition, and that people will be able to enjoy it for years to come," said Adam Moore, Executive Director of the Connecticut Forest & Park Association.

Murphy has been pushing this bill since he came to Congress in January. In May, he testified before the Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands in support of HR 1528. In recent months, he has asked Natural Resources Committee Chairman Nick J. Rahall and Majority Leader Steny Hoyer to bring the legislation to the full House for a vote.

The Senate has not acted on its version of the legislation, S. 923, sponsored by Senator John Kerry of Massachusetts.

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