

5498

2015-2016 Regular Sessions

I N S E N A T E

May 14, 2015

Introduced by Sen. AMEDORE -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Cultural Affairs, Tourism, Parks and Recreation

AN ACT to establish a geoparks task force to provide a plan for the identification of and make recommendations for educational opportunities associated with geological sites as geoparks throughout the state

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, REPRESENTED IN SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

1 Section 1. Legislative findings. The legislature hereby finds that the
2 state is geographically rich with numerous and diverse significant
3 geological sites. In the nineteenth century this state was a world
4 center for the study of geology. Furthermore, the state museum along
5 with a number of private and public institutions of higher education
6 teach and engage in geologic research. There are at least 68 significant
7 geological sites within the 178 state parks.
8 The Global Geoparks Network was established as a United Nations Educa-
9 tional, Scientific and Cultural Organization program in 1998 to seek the
10 promotion and conservation of the earth's geological heritage, as well
11 as fostering sustainable research, education and development by inter-
12 ested communities. At least 58 geoparks in 18 countries have been
13 included in such network.
14 This legislature further finds that greater recognition of the state's
15 geologic resources would foster wider education about these resources
16 and sustainable socio-economic development, such as geotourism.
17 Therefore, this act establishes a geologic task force to survey and
18 formulate a plan for identifying sites for a system of geoparks, and a
19 management and development strategy for geoparks.
20 S 2. There is hereby established a geoparks task force, which shall
21 consist of eleven members. The membership of such task force shall be as
22 follows: the commissioner of parks, recreation and historic preservation

EXPLANATION--Matter in *ITALICS* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[] is old law to be omitted.

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1 or his or her designee; the commissioner of education or his or her
2 designee; the commissioner of environmental conservation or his or her
3 designee; two members appointed by the governor; two members appointed
4 by the speaker of the assembly; two members appointed by the temporary
5 president of the senate; one member appointed by the minority leader of
6 the assembly; and one member appointed by the minority leader of the
7 senate. The appointed members of the task force shall be individuals
8 with experience in the areas of geology, education, sustainable develop-
9 ment and/or parks. The commissioner of education shall serve as chair of
10 the task force.

11 S 3. On or before the first day of the twenty-fourth calendar month
12 next succeeding the effective date of this act, the task force shall
13 submit a report to the governor and the legislature identifying the
14 sites with significant geological resources including, but not limited
15 to, sites within existing state parks and other parklands in the state.
16 The process of identification of such sites shall include: (a) consider-
17 ation of opportunities for utilizing the site as part of educational
18 programs serving both students and visitors; (b) consideration of oppor-
19 tunities for socio-economic development that is sustainable such as
20 geotourism; (c) consideration of methods for conserving and enhancing
21 geological heritage that can foster teaching geoscientific disciplines
22 and broader environmental issues; and (d) consideration of opportunities
23 for engaging and/or connecting with state agencies, local governments,
24 heritage areas and private interests in the protection and management of
25 this site.

26 Such report shall also include recommendations for programs to accom-
27 modate both public and private use, and strategies for management plan-
28 ning for protection, development and use. It shall also include an esti-
29 mate of public and private costs to implement recommendations in the
30 report.

31 The task force shall consult with officials and representatives of the
32 federal government and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and
33 Cultural Organization with responsibilities relating to geoscience,
34 parks, sustainable development and education relating to this act, and
35 shall conduct three public hearings in different areas of the state
36 while it is preparing the report.

37 The task force may request and shall receive from any department,
38 division, board, bureau, commission or other agency of the state or any
39 political subdivision thereof or any public authority such assistance
40 and data as may be necessary to enable it to carry out its responsibil-
41 ities under this act.

42 S 4. This act shall take effect immediately.