

5498--A

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 -- recommitted to the Committee on Cultural Affairs, Tourism, Parks and Recreation in accordance with Senate Rule 6, sec. 8 -- reported favorably from said committee and committed to the Committee on Finance -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee

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.

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

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1 Therefore, this act establishes a geologic task force to survey and
2 formulate a plan for identifying sites for a system of geoparks, and a
3 management and development strategy for geoparks.

4 S 2. There is hereby established a geoparks task force, which shall
5 consist of eleven members. The membership of such task force shall be as
6 follows: the commissioner of parks, recreation and historic preservation
7 or his or her designee; the commissioner of education or his or her
8 designee; the commissioner of environmental conservation or his or her
9 designee; two members appointed by the governor; two members appointed
10 by the speaker of the assembly; two members appointed by the temporary
11 president of the senate; one member appointed by the minority leader of
12 the assembly; and one member appointed by the minority leader of the
13 senate. The appointed members of the task force shall be individuals
14 with experience in the areas of geology, education, sustainable develop-
15 ment and/or parks. The commissioner of education shall serve as chair of
16 the task force. The members of the task force shall receive no compen-
17 sation for their services, but shall be allowed their actual and neces-
18 sary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties pursuant to
19 this act.

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

35 Such report shall also include recommendations for programs to accom-
36 modate both public and private use, and strategies for management plan-
37 ning for protection, development and use. It shall also include an esti-
38 mate of public and private costs to implement recommendations in the
39 report.

40 The task force shall consult with officials and representatives of the
41 federal government and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and
42 Cultural Organization with responsibilities relating to geoscience,
43 parks, sustainable development and education relating to this act, and
44 shall conduct three public hearings in different areas of the state
45 while it is preparing the report.

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

51 S 4. This act shall take effect immediately.