



THE ROAD AHEAD PARTNERSHIP

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Route 66 Moves Closer to National Historic Trail Status

On October 11, Senator Tom Udall, [D] Senior Senator for New Mexico introduced S3609, a bill to amend the National Trails System Act to designate the Route 66 National Historic Trail. Senator James Inhofe of Oklahoma joined Senator Udall [R] as the bill's co-sponsor. S3609 has been assigned to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. Several Senators from Route 66 states sit on this committee, including Tammy Duckworth [D-IL], Jeff Flake [R-AZ], and Martin Heinrich [D-NM].

Gaining National Historic Trail recognition for Route 66 is a primary goal of the Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership, and this action in the U.S. Senate has brought that goal closer to reality.

"Route 66 is iconic — a long stretch of old road that cuts across eight states, linking the American West through a patchwork of Americana," said Udall. "It's not just a place, but a personality; an open road symbolizing freedom. By designating Route 66 as a National Historic Trail, this legislation will revitalize cities, small towns and rural communities along the Route 66 corridor in New Mexico and across the country, bolstering local economies and protecting vibrant historic sites. Just as importantly, this bill would safeguard Route 66 as cultural landmark, preserving its significance as the 'Main Street of America' for future generations of adventurers, migrants, hitchhikers, and tourists venturing westward."

"Route 66 deserves recognition as a National Historic Trail," added Inhofe. "Oklahoma is home to the longest drivable stretch of 'America's Main Street,' which earned its name from decades of connecting small businesses and rural communities with visitors from around the country. Museums from Clinton to Elk City to Chandler highlight the impact of this road as a representation of American pioneer values. I am proud to introduce this bill that will ensure Route 66 continues to reflect the history of our nation."

The effort to designate Rt. 66 a National Historic Trail took a major step earlier this summer when the U.S. House of Representatives unanimously passed HR801, a bill originally introduced by Illinois Congressman Darin LaHood [R]. The text of the Senate version of this legislation is identical to the bill passed by the House, meaning it will not have to spend time in a conference committee resolving language differences once the Senate passes S3609. Rather, it will go straight to the President's desk for signature. The goal is to have the measure passed by the full Congress and signed by the President by or before the end of 2018.

Established in 2015, with the support of the National Park Service and the World Monuments' Fund, The Route 66 Road Ahead Partnership's mission is to revitalize and sustain Route 66 as a national and international icon through partnerships focused on promotion, preservation, research and education, and economic development.

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