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[H.R. 984, to amend the National Trails System Act to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study on the feasibility of designating the Chief Standing Bear National Historic Trail](#)

FLOOR SITUATION

On Tuesday, April 28, 2015, the House will consider [H.R. 984](#), *to amend the National Trails System Act to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study on the feasibility of designating the Chief Standing Bear National Historic Trail*, under a suspension of the rules. The bill was introduced on February 13, 2015 by Rep. Jeff Fortenberry (R-NE) and was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources, which ordered the bill reported by unanimous consent on March 25, 2015.¹

SUMMARY

H.R. 984 would require the National Park Service (NPS) to study the feasibility of designating the Chief Standing Bear Trail in the states of Nebraska and Oklahoma as a National Historic Trail. The Secretary of the Interior would be required to consider input from private owners of land within or adjacent to the area when conducting the study. Additional legislation would be needed to designate the Trail, if appropriate.

BACKGROUND

The Chief Standing Bear Trail, extending approximately 550 miles from Niobrara, Nebraska, to Ponca City, Oklahoma, follows the route taken by Chief Standing Bear and the Ponca people during Federal Indian removal. It is a circular trail and charts not only the removal, but also the Chief's return to Nebraska. The Trail also commemorates the Chief's return to Nebraska and subsequent trial in 1879, when he became the first Native American to be recognized as a person in a Federal court decision.²

A similar bill, [H.R. 5086](#), was passed by voice vote on December 9, 2014 (See [CR H8881](#)). The Senate did not act on the House-passed bill in the 113th Congress.

¹ See [House Report 114-78](#) at 2.

² Id at 1.

COST

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) [estimates](#) that implementing the legislation would cost about \$500,000 over the next year or two, assuming availability of appropriated funds. Enacting H.R. 984 would not affect direct spending or revenues; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply.

STAFF CONTACT

For questions or further information please contact [John Huston](#) with the House Republican Policy Committee by email or at 6-5539.