



H.R.3111 – PORT CHICAGO NAVAL MAGAZINE NATIONAL MEMORIAL ENHANCEMENT ACT OF 2007

FLOOR SITUATION

H.R.3111 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative George Miller (D-CA) on July 19, 2007. The House Committee on Natural Resources ordered the bill to be reported by unanimous consent on October 10, 2007.

H.R.3111 is expected to be considered on the floor of the House on March 4, 2008.

SUMMARY

H.R.3111 amends the Port Chicago National Memorial Act of 1992 (Public Law 102-562), and directs the Secretary of the Interior to administer the Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial as a unit of the National Park System. The legislation authorizes the Secretary to enter into an agreement with the City of Concord, California, and the East Bay Regional Park District to establish a facility for visitor orientation and parking, administrative offices, and curatorial storage for the Memorial.

The bill directs the Secretary of Defense to perform all environmental remediation steps necessary to repair any environmental contamination that may have occurred to the property of the Memorial as a result of military activities.

It is the sense of Congress that in order to preserve the Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial for future generations, the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of the Interior should work together to:

- Repair storm damage to the Port Chicago site; and
- Develop a process by which future repairs and necessary modifications to the site can be achieved in as timely and cost-effective a manner as possible.

BACKGROUND

The Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial is located at the Concord Naval Weapons Station near Concord, California. The Memorial recognizes the role that Port Chicago played in World War II by serving as the main facility for actions that took place in the Pacific Theatre. The Memorial also commemorates the Port Chicago Explosion that occurred at the naval magazine, where 320 men were instantly killed when the munitions ships they were loading with ammunition for the Pacific theatre troops inexplicably exploded. Those killed in the explosion were U.S. Sailors, Marines, Navy Armed Guard, Coast Guardsmen, Merchant Marines, and working civilians. Over 200 of the deaths were young African-American enlisted sailors working for a segregated military.

COST

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that it would cost the National Park Service about \$200,000 a year to operate the memorial as a park unit

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