



H.R. 1423 – THE DOROTHY BUELL MEMORIAL VISITOR CENTER LEASE ACT

FLOOR SITUATION

H.R. 1423 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 Peter Visclosky (D-IN) on March 8, 2007. The House Committee on Natural Resources ordered the bill to be reported, as amended, by unanimous consent on June 11, 2008.

H.R. 1423 is expected to be considered on the floor of the House on July 8, 2008.

SUMMARY

H.R. 1423 authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to enter into a memorandum of understanding with the Porter County Convention, Recreation and Visitor Commission. This memorandum is to establish the management and operational duties for the Dorothy Buell Memorial Visitor Center.

After entering into a memorandum of understanding, the Secretary and the Commission may then lease space in the Visitor Center to be used as a visitor informational center for Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. The Secretary may install exhibits and information centers related to the use and resources of the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore costing no more than \$1.5 million. Additionally, the Secretary may use park staff from the Indiana Dunes to provide visitors with information at the exhibit and information center.

BACKGROUND

The [Dorothy Buell Memorial Visitor Center](#) is located in northwest Indiana along the southern tip of Lake Michigan. Dorothy Buell was president of the Save the Dunes Council. Through the efforts of the Save the Dunes Council and other organizations, the 89th Congress designated 8,330 acres of land and water as the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore. Today, the Dunes consist of over 15,000 acres of Federally protected park land.

The Dunes are home to sandy beaches along Lake Michigan, as well as a variety of plant and wild life. The Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore was recognized by Congress in 1966 through the efforts of Henry Cowles, a University of Chicago botanist, Illinois Senator Paul H. Douglas, and Ms. Buell, who lived near the Dunes and was an English teacher.

COST

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that “the NPS would spend \$1.5 million over the 2009-2013 period for exhibits in the new visitor facility. CBO also estimates that the leasing provisions of the bill would create budget authority of about \$2 million in 2009 for a capital lease that would be executed with the Porter County Convention, Recreation, and Visitor Commission (PCCRVA, the owner of the visitor center). We estimate that annual lease payments under the new contract would increase direct spending by about \$1 million over the 2009-2018 period.” [Full CBO cost estimate for H.R. 1423](#)

STAFF CONTACT

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