

LARSON AND OTHERS TESTIFY BEFORE HOUSE RESOURCES COMMITTEE ON COLTSVILLE STUDY ACT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 8, 2003

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National Park Service Testifies in Support of Legislation

WASHINGTON, D.C.- At a hearing held today before the House Resources Committee, a representative of the National Park Service testified that the Department of the Interior supports H.R. 437, the Coltsville Study Act of 2003. The bill would initiate a feasibility study of the 17-acre Coltsville property in Hartford as a first step in seeking a National Park designation for the area. U.S. Congressman John B. Larson (CT-01), who introduced the legislation into the House, also testified before the committee as well as Robert Kohn, Chief Operating Officer of Colt Gateway, a subsidiary of Homes for America Holdings, Inc., the owners and developers of the Coltsville property.

In his testimony, Larson stated: "This legislation and its overwhelming local support signifies that we are starting on the road to developing and cultivating Coltsville's history and its importance to Hartford, the State of Connecticut and the nation. The Senate version of this legislation, S. 233, was approved by unanimous consent on March 4, 2003. Along with other members of the delegation and the community, I am committed to preserving the area's immeasurable historical value. Coltsville is a unique regional and international landmark. I look forward to seeing the immense potential that the property holds fully utilized."

In his testimony, Jeffrey Taylor, Assistant Director of Legislative and Congressional Affairs for the National Park Service in the Department of the Interior stated: "The Department supports H.R. 437. The Coltsville study area includes nationally-significant buildings including Armsmear, a National Historic Landmark, and structures that are part of the Colt Industrial National Register District. The history of this site complements that of the Springfield Armory National Historic Site, a unit of the National Park Service. Together they could show how innovations in the firearms industry laid the foundation for the American system of manufacturing. Only through further investigation will it be possible to determine if some part of the study area is feasible and suitable for inclusion in the National Park System, and what role, if any, the National Park Service should play at this site."

In his testimony, Mr. Kohn stated: "I strongly support a study to include Coltsville in the National Park System. Coltsville's national significance, suitability and feasibility for designation as well as the importance of the site to the historic preservation of an American legacy make this site an ideal candidate for inclusion in the National Park System. In my opinion, there are few more deserving locations for the National Park designation than Coltsville. Coltsville's fascinating history, its impact on innovation and American history, its positioning as the home of Elizabeth Colt as one of the first female industrialists, the site's compatibility with other nearby National Parks and the momentum, planning and financing currently in place to make this park and reality all are persuasive grounds for supporting this study."

Today's hearing was the first step needed for the Committee to take action on H.R. 437. The Senate version of the Coltsville Study Act was introduced by Senators Chris Dodd and Joseph I. Lieberman and was passed unanimously in March.

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For more information on Coltsville and the Coltsville Study Act, visit <http://www.house.gov/larson/coltsville.htm>