

**Washington, D.C.** - In commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the Blue Ridge Parkway, U.S. Representatives Heath Shuler (D-N.C.), David Price (D-N.C.), Rick Boucher (D-VA) and Tom Perriello (D-VA) introduced a bill today that authorizes the National Park Service to acquire up to 50,000 acres of land bordering the scenic roadway. The Blue Ridge Parkway Protection Act will allow the Park Service to protect the views that make the Parkway such a popular attraction and roadway.

Nearly 20 million people visit the Blue Ridge Parkway each year, making it the National Park Service's most popular site. The Parkway is an economic driver for the region, generating about \$2.3 billion in economic activity in both states annually.

"The Blue Ridge Parkway offers some of the most spectacular mountain views in the nation, and this legislation will preserve those views for our children and grandchildren," Shuler said. "Additionally, the Parkway provides convenient access for residents and visitors to hiking, hunting and other recreational activities. The Parkway has become an important source of income for Western North Carolina and it is imperative that we protect it."

The Blue Ridge Parkway Protection Act will authorize \$75 million over five years to buy and preserve land adjacent to the Blue Ridge Parkway. The legislation would allow adjustments to the Parkway's boundary to include the new land acquisition, and no property would be acquired through eminent domain.

"Visitors say that the pristine, undeveloped landscape is the biggest reason they choose to visit the Parkway, so preserving those views is of vital economic importance to North Carolina and Virginia," Rep. Price said. "Ensuring the continued conservation of the land around the Parkway is also a fitting way to celebrate the Parkway's 75th year."

The Conservation Trust of North Carolina proposed the legislation as an appropriate commemoration of the 75th anniversary. U.S. Senators Kay R. Hagan (D-NC), Richard Burr (R-NC), Mark Warner (D-VA) and Jim Webb (D-VA) introduced companion legislation in the Senate.

"The Blue Ridge Parkway is one of our region's most valuable assets, bringing millions of visitors from across the nation each year to experience our unparalleled natural landscape. This legislation ensures that the scenic vistas the Parkway affords will remain intact for future generations," Rep. Boucher said.

"Growing up as an Eagle Scout in the shadow of the Blue Ridge Mountains, I want to preserve this national treasure for future generations to enjoy. Protecting the Blue Ridge Parkway will increase its attraction to more tourists, boosting economic activity for our region," Rep. Perriello said.

In addition to the Blue Ridge Parkway Protection Act , Reps. Heath Shuler, David Price, Rick Boucher, Tom Perriello, Virginia Foxx, and Patrick McHenry will be introducing a commemorative resolution celebrating the Parkway's 75th anniversary in the U.S. House of Representatives.

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