

Bayfield County

Resolution

No. 2024-xxx

In Opposition to H.R. 9111

Whereas; H.R. 9111 would redesignate the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore as the Apostle Islands National Park and Preserve, and for other purposes; and,

Whereas; The stated reason for the proposed redesignation is to increase tourism to create economic growth by creating more jobs, private investment in hospitality facilities and services, and public infrastructure investments; and,

Whereas; There were no local public informational meetings held to inform the public, the tourist industry, and park users about the proposal which would have allowed the public to ask questions, receive answers, and to offer their suggestions and input; and,

Whereas; There was no coordination with local governments or officials or meaningful information, communication, consultation, or questions answered about the proposal with the Native American Tribes, or the counties, towns, and cities that would be most affected by this proposal prior to its being introduced in Congress; and,

Whereas; No feasibility study has been proposed or completed to establish what private and public facilities, accommodations, and infrastructure would be required to accommodate more tourists, as well what the Federal land and nearby communities' capacities are for accommodating more tourists; and,

Whereas; The proposal is much more than just a name change. Changing the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore to a National Park and Preserve deserves a deliberate, thoughtful, transparent, in-depth, and inclusive public process so all voices can be heard and their questions answered; and,

Whereas; While tourism is a very large and important part of Bayfield County's economy which needs to be maintained, we need assistance to broaden and diversify our economy into other sectors so that we are not overly reliant on only one economic sector. For example, the County is a large producer of forest products, most of which are exported from the County for value-added processing. We would welcome assistance in creating businesses that would process and add value to our forest products; and,

Whereas; Native American rights on Reservation lands and Native American treaty rights to hunt, fish and gather on ceded territory lands may be negatively affected; and,

Whereas; The proposal would prohibit hunting and trapping on approximately 39,000 acres of land which are now open and available to these recreational activities; and,

Whereas; Designating Sand Island as a preserve would reduce the protection of the natural, historical and cultural resources on the island since natural resource extractions and uses such as mining and logging could be allowed and commercial development such as resorts and marinas could be allowed; and,

Whereas; The proposal could negatively impact privately reserved rights and uses on Sand and Rocky Islands; and,

Whereas; The proposal could negatively impact historical designated sites on the islands; and,

Whereas; The 1964 Wilderness Act defines wilderness as possessing "outstanding opportunities for solitude" any significant increase in park visitation and use of the Gaylor Nelson Wilderness in the Apostle Islands may damage and degrade those important opportunities; and,

Whereas; The proposal does not address the existing backlog of deferred maintenance on the Federal property. Representative Tiffany, as chair of the US House of Representatives Subcommittee on Federal Lands, is in a position to work with the both the House and Senate Appropriations committee to address the deferred maintenance backlog before the property is redesignated as National Park which would increase visitation rates; and,

Whereas; The Proposal does not address the resources and services the Park Service needs for both the current visitation rates and for the anticipated increase in visitor use if it becomes a National Park. This should be addressed before any consideration is given to redesignation as a National Park; and,

Whereas; The area that would be most affected by more tourists already has a shortage of emergency service personnel and facilities. The proposal does not include any Federal help or assistance to address these issues and needs; and,

Whereas; The current National Lakeshore designation adequately and appropriately protects the natural, cultural and historic resources while allowing for public use and enjoyment. The proposal is a 'solution' in search of a problem;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: that the Bayfield County Board of Supervisors assembled, this 27th day of August 2024, does hereby oppose H. R. 9111 which would redesignate the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore as the Apostle Islands National Park and Preserve, and for other purposes; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED; that this Resolution be sent to all of Wisconsin's elected Federal Representatives and elected local State officials.

Adopted by the Bayfield County Board of Supervisors