

Durbin Introduces Bill to Make Cahokia Mounds a National Historic Park

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WASHINGTON – U.S. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) today introduced a bill that would designate the Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site as a National Historic Park. Cahokia Mounds is currently a National Historic Landmark, but Durbin’s bill would provide a new designation that ensures protection for the ancient mounds in St. Clair and Madison counties along with Sugarloaf Mound in St. Louis—the city’s only remaining mound.

“The Cahokia Mounds represent the indigenous peoples and landscapes that once made up one of America’s first cities in the Western Hemisphere,” said Durbin. “This designation would ensure we protect this fascinating historical site for generations to come.”

“The Mississippian Culture, with Cahokia Mounds as its center, was once the largest urban center in North America. The heritage of many Native American nations and tribes is connected to the Mississippian Culture. Elevating Cahokia Mounds and

associated Mississippian mound groups to a National Historical Park would not only bring more national awareness to the Mississippian Culture, but also increase tourism in southwestern Illinois and the St. Louis region,” said Mary Vandevord, President & CEO of HeartLands Conservancy. “Thanks to the tremendous ongoing support from Senator Durbin and from Representative Bost, as well as Congressmen Clay, Davis, and Shimkus, the ability to better preserve and celebrate the Mississippian Culture-America's First Cities- is closer to becoming a reality.”

U.S. Representative Mike Bost (R-IL-12) introduced a companion bill in the House of Representatives earlier this month.

The City of Cahokia was inhabited from 700 A.D. to 1400. At its peak, from 1050 to 1200, the city covered nearly six square miles (larger than London at that time) and between 10,000 and 20,000 people lived there. More than 120 mounds were built over time. The site is named for the Cahokia subtribe of the Illinois tribe, who moved into the area in the 1600s.