

Durbin, Duckworth Urge Biden To Designate Cahokia Mounds As Unit Of National Park System

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WASHINGTON – U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL) and U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth today sent a letter to President Biden urging him to use his authority under the *Antiquities Act* to incorporate the Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site under the National Park System and offer additional protections for the ancient mounds in St. Clair and Madison counties. In their letter, the Senators call back to Durbin’s 2014 request for the National Park Service (NPS) to conduct a reconnaissance study to

determine if the site meets requirements to be a unit of the National Park System. The study, which was concluded in 2016, found that Cahokia Mounds met all four of the criteria – significance, suitability, feasibility, and need for NPS management.

“We write to encourage you to use your authority under the *Antiquities Act* to designate the Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site as a unit of the National Park System. We support elevating, protecting, and sharing this important archeological and cultural resource that represents the people and landscapes that once made up one of America’s first cities in the Western Hemisphere,” the Senators wrote.

“Given the importance of this area and the support of the National Park Service, we support using your authority under the *Antiquities Act* to declare the Cahokia Mounds as a unit of the National Park System,” the Senators concluded.

Earlier this year, Durbin introduced the *Cahokia Mounds Mississippian Culture National Historical Park Act* to elevate the site from its current designation as a National Historic Landmark to a National Historic Park, offering additional protections for the ancient mounds.

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.