



Senate

General Assembly

File No. 30

February Session, 2016

Senate Bill No. 81

Senate, March 10, 2016

The Committee on Environment reported through SEN. KENNEDY of the 12th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the bill ought to pass.

AN ACT CONCERNING THE DESIGNATION OF CERTAIN AREAS OF THE HOUSATONIC RIVER AS A WILD AND SCENIC RIVER.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) The portion of the
2 Housatonic River that is the subject of a memorandum of agreement
3 among the Housatonic River Commission, the National Park Service,
4 the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, the
5 Northwest Hills Council of Governments and the Housatonic Valley
6 Association, Inc. is designated as a wild and scenic river for purposes
7 of preservation of said river under the federal Wild and Scenic Rivers
8 Act, Public Law 90-542, as amended.

9 (b) The Northwest Hills Council of Governments shall act as the
10 administering agency for the Housatonic River on behalf of the
11 Housatonic River Commission, in accordance with the terms of the
12 memorandum of agreement described in subsection (a) of this section
13 and as required by Section 2(a)(ii) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.
14 The Northwest Hills Council of Governments shall constitute a

15 political subdivision of the state for purposes of executing its duties
16 and responsibilities in accordance with this section.

17 (c) The Governor shall submit an application to the Secretary of the
18 Interior for purposes of completion of the designation of the portion of
19 the Housatonic River, described in subsection (a) of this section, under
20 Section 2(a)(ii) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	New section

ENV *Joint Favorable*

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

OFA Fiscal Note***State Impact:*** None***Municipal Impact:*** None***Explanation***

The bill designates certain sections of the Housatonic River as a wild and scenic river and requires the Governor to apply to the U.S. secretary of the Interior to complete the designation.

The locally initiated wild and scenic river designation would not qualify a river for federal grants under the National Park Service's Challenge Cost Share Program. Therefore, the bill does not result in a fiscal impact.

The Out Years***State Impact:*** None***Municipal Impact:*** None

OLR Bill Analysis**SB 81*****AN ACT CONCERNING THE DESIGNATION OF CERTAIN AREAS OF THE HOUSATONIC RIVER AS A WILD AND SCENIC RIVER.*****SUMMARY:**

This bill designates the northern section of the Housatonic River as a wild and scenic river in order to preserve it according to the federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. The 41-mile section extends from the Massachusetts border to New Milford's Boardman Bridge.

Under the bill, the Northwest Hills Council of Governments (NHCOG) acts as the administering agency for the river on behalf of the Housatonic River Commission (HRC). It must do so according to terms set out in a memorandum of agreement between the NHCOG, HRC, National Park Service, Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, and Housatonic Valley Association, Inc. The bill specifies that, for this purpose, the NHCOG is a political subdivision of the state.

The bill requires the governor to apply to the U.S. secretary of the Interior to complete the river's designation as a wild and scenic river. Rivers designated by the secretary are included in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

BACKGROUND***Wild and Scenic Rivers Act***

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (P.L. 90-542) protects free-flowing rivers with important scenic, natural, recreational, historic, cultural, or similar values. A river may be designated as wild and scenic and included in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System either (1)

through congressional action or (2) at the request of a governor if the river is already protected by a state river protection program. The latter process requires administration of the river by an agency or political subdivision of the state.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Environment Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 29 Nay 0 (02/24/2016)