

Testimony of Senator Joseph Lieberman

Hearing on S.574, a Bill to Amend the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor Act of 1994

Subcommittee on National Parks United States Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

June 22, 2006

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley in northeastern Connecticut and south-central Massachusetts is “The Last Green Valley” in the midst of the urban sprawl that covers much of the Boston-to-Washington corridor. This National Heritage Area is half the size of Grand Canyon National Park and more than ten times the size of Acadia National Park, the largest national park in the northeast. This regionally and nationally important landscape provides wildlife habitat, recreation opportunities, and important ecosystem services, such as carbon sequestration, erosion control, and clean water.

I have supported the efforts of my esteemed colleague from Connecticut, Senator Dodd, who has worked tirelessly to ensure funding for this important National Heritage Area, as have my friends from Massachusetts, Senators Kennedy and Kerry.

Thanks to the excellent management of the nationally-recognized grassroots nonprofit organization, Quinebaug-Shetucket Heritage Corridor (QSHC), Inc., federal appropriations have been leveraged and matched by funds from state, local, and private sources with a cumulative ratio of nineteen dollars to each federal dollar. QSHC Inc. has developed “The Trail to 2015, a Sustainability Plan,” which puts The Last Green Valley on track to being self sufficient and sustainably managed by 2015.

Today I testify in support of amending the Quinebaug and Shetucket Rivers Valley National Heritage Corridor Reauthorization Act of 1994 to extend the period of authorization through 2015 – six years beyond the 2009 current level – and to maintain the level of authorized funding at one million dollars per year throughout that period. That would represent a total authorization increase of six million dollars. This amendment comports with QSHC Inc.’s management plan and reflects the fact that QSHC will not need federal money after 2015.

With this amendment, we can ensure that The Last Green Valley remains green and protected for future generations and for America’s wildlife. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.