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Rep. Fleischmann Introduces Bipartisan Benton MacKaye National Scenic Trail Feasibility Study Act

- Wednesday, April 30, 2025

U.S. Rep. Chuck Fleischmann introduced the bipartisan Benton MacKaye National Scenic Trail Feasibility Study Act, which would authorize a study to designate a 287-mile trail linking Georgia, Tennessee and North Carolina as a National Scenic Trail. A companion bill was introduced in the Senate by U.S. Senator Thom Tillis (R-NC). The trail, which crosses mountains and valleys and passes alongside streams and waterfalls, is on federal land for 95 percent of its length and would be administered by the U.S. Forest Service.

"I am proud to lead this effort and work with my bipartisan colleagues in the House and Senate to designate the beautiful Benton MacKaye Trail as a National Scenic Trail," said Congressman Fleischmann. "The Benton MacKaye Trail is an invaluable part of my district in East Tennessee that thousands of Tennesseans and Americans hike each year, and the trail connects some of the most beautiful and pristine parts of Tennessee with Georgia and North Carolina. The Benton MacKaye Trail deserves a National Scenic Trail designation. I call on my colleagues in the House and Senate to act quickly to pass our bipartisan bill and send it to President Trump for his signature."

"The Benton MacKaye Trail is deserving of consideration as a National Scenic Trail. I'm pleased to join my fellow Tennessean Congressman Fleischmann and Senators Tillis and Warnock on legislation to do just that," said Rep. Steve Cohen. "National designation would mean increased tourism and enjoyment of the outdoors along the entire 287-mile stretch of the trail."

"Completed in 2005, the Benton MacKaye Trail provides an exceptional opportunity for tens of thousands of people to get outdoors each year and experience the stunning beauty of the Southern Appalachian Mountains," said Bob Cowdrick, president of the Benton MacKaye Trail Association. "The legislation introduced today, the Benton MacKaye National Scenic Trail Feasibility Study Act of 2025, is a critical step forward in the process of evaluating the trail's potential to become our nation's 12th National Scenic Trail. This study would help protect our storied outdoor heritage for future generations, support local economies, and provide a wide

array of recreation opportunities for everyone from day hikers to thru-hikers and solo trekkers to families. We are grateful to Congressman Fleischmann for championing this effort to preserve a trail that means so much to so many.”

In addition to Congressman Fleischmann’s support, H.R. 2768 is cosponsored in the House of Representatives by Reps. Steve Cohen (TN-09), Chuck Edwards (NC-11), and Lucy McBath (GA-06). The bill, introduced by Senator Thom Tillis (R-NC) in the Senate, is cosponsored by Senators Ted Budd (R-NC) and Raphael Warnock (D-GA).