



Press Releases

Pingree Amendment to Protect York River Passes US House in Wilderness Protection Package

Maine's 1st District Congresswoman has Long Championed Adding the York River to the National Park Service's Wild and Scenic List

Washington, February 26, 2021



Today, after nearly a decade of advocacy, an amendment offered by Congresswoman Chellie Pingree (D-Maine) to federally protect the York River passed the U.S. House.

Pingree's amendment designating the York River as 'Wild and Scenic'

passed as part of The Protecting America's Wilderness and Public Lands Act. The bill, H.R. 803, recognizes approximately 1.5 million acres of wilderness and protects more than 1,200 miles of river under the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The bill also withdraws over 1.2 million acres of public land from new drilling and mining leases. The bill now proceeds to the U.S. Senate for approval. If passed, the York River will finally receive long-awaited federal protection and funding.

“This legislation will permanently protect more than a million acres of public land as wilderness, ensuring access to clean water, air, and land for generations to come,” **said Pingree**. “I’m proud this legislation includes a Wild and Scenic River designation for the York River, which has always been an incredible asset to the communities it runs through. With federal support, the York River will be a regional gem far into the future, and I appreciate that this effort was included in the House’s work to conserve our public lands and waters and protect them from the effects of the climate crisis.”

Pingree [first introduced legislation](#) to add the York River to the National Park Service’s Wild-and-Scenic List in the 116th Congress. Her bill followed a [three-year study](#) (funded by legislation that Pingree [introduced in 2011](#) and Congress passed in 2014) by local stakeholders that recommended the designation. In 2018, the voters of York and Eliot overwhelmingly passed referendums to move forward with the designation, as did the town councils of Kittery and South Berwick. A Wild and Scenic River designation would direct more federal funding and technical assistance to the area, while lifting the York River’s profile as a national destination. It also would provide a local forum for the four watershed communities to collaboratively address long-term river stewardship needs.