

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2021

H.J.R. 1170
Jun 13, 2022
HOUSE PRINCIPAL CLERK

H

D

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION DRHJR40800-LG-278C

Sponsors: Representative Clampitt.

Referred to:

1 A JOINT RESOLUTION URGING CONGRESS TO OPPOSE THE IMPOSITION OF THE
2 PROPOSED PARKING FEES FOR THE GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL
3 PARK.

4 Whereas, the current administration of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park
5 (hereinafter "Park") has proposed unprecedented park-wide parking fees for visitors to the Park,
6 including citizens of the great State of North Carolina; and

7 Whereas, the proposed parking fee is being presented as an expanded amenity fee
8 despite there being no expanded amenity being offered by the Park. In actuality, the Park's current
9 administration has admitted that it intends to limit parking in certain areas of the Park; and

10 Whereas, more than half of the land in the Park is contained within the State of North
11 Carolina, including significant tracts of land in Haywood County as well as Swain County, which
12 makes up 42% of the Park's acreage; and

13 Whereas, the Swain County Board of Commissioners passed a resolution expressing
14 its formal opposition to the imposition of parking fees and any other fees that are not directly
15 associated with the use of amenities in the Park and has been joined by the Haywood County
16 Board of Commissioners which stated its own opposition to the imposition of these parking fees
17 via a letter sent directly to the Park's current administration and other federal officials. These
18 counties have been further joined by Graham County, which shares a border with the GSMNP,
19 and its Board of Commissioners, with their own resolution in opposition to the imposition of
20 parking fees in GSMNP; and

21 Whereas, North Carolina citizens and families contributed greatly to the lands that
22 now make up the Park. Many current North Carolinians are descendants of the original
23 inhabitants of the land in the Park and have ancestors buried within the boundaries of the Park,
24 including 1,100 grave sites in 21 cemeteries in Swain County. In addition to the parking fees,
25 area residents have been told that they can no longer hold religious services in the Park and that
26 the Park's administration may no longer accommodate the transportation of decorations for the
27 graves of veterans buried in the Park; and

28 Whereas, the Park was established as a fee-free Park and it was understood by those
29 that gave up their lands to create the Park that there would never be a charge to enter the Park.
30 The proposed parking fee represents a clear attempt to circumvent the historical understanding
31 and agreements for a fee-free Park and would be a significant blow to the public's trust; and

32 Whereas, the Park, which is the country's most visited National Park and the leading
33 attraction for many visitors to North Carolina, is a national treasure and a matter of State pride
34 for many North Carolinians; and

35 Whereas, the Park was created for public use and the benefit of all citizens. The
36 imposition of parking fees would represent a significant impediment and detrimental burden for
37 certain citizens wishing to freely access their federal public lands contained within the Park; and



1 Whereas, the imposition of parking fees also represents a threat to tourism in North
2 Carolina, particularly small businesses that rely on visitors to the Park; and

3 Whereas, such federal recreation fees represent a form of double taxation and, once
4 established, are usually never removed and almost always have been proven to increase and even
5 double over time; and

6 Whereas, the Park's current administration has failed to provide sufficient or
7 necessary information as to (i) how the proposed parking fees would be enforced, (ii) how the
8 revenues raised from the fees would be allocated within the Park, and (iii) what amount of the
9 revenue from the fee would be funneled back to directly benefit the Park's parking program; and

10 Whereas, the Park's current administration has not presented any evidence to suggest
11 there is public support for the proposed parking fee which is a requirement stated in the National
12 Park Service's Recreation Fee Collection Manual (Reference Manual 22A) governing these fees
13 and their establishment. Much to the contrary and as demonstrated, the duly elected
14 representatives of the people in the jurisdictions closest to the Park have stated their opposition
15 to the proposed parking fees; and

16 Whereas, the General Assembly urges Congress to take action to prevent the
17 administration of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park to impose parking fees as it is the
18 role of Congress to fund our National Parks through the federal appropriations process, not
19 individual citizens through parking fees; Now, therefore,

20 Be it resolved by the House of Representatives, the Senate concurring:

21 **SECTION 1.** The General Assembly urges Congress to take action in preventing any
22 proposed parking fees for the Great Smoky Mountains National Park or any further fee for the
23 use of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

24 **SECTION 2.** The General Assembly does hereby proclaim its earnest desire to see
25 the Great Smoky Mountains National Park remain freely accessible to all North Carolinians and
26 continue as the naturally wild and fee-free unit of the National Park Service that it has been in
27 the past.

28 **SECTION 3.** The Secretary of State shall transmit a copy of this resolution to the
29 members of North Carolina's congressional delegation and the current administration of the Great
30 Smoky Mountains National Park.

31 **SECTION 4.** This resolution is effective upon ratification.