America's scenic roadways got a major boost in Congress on February 6 as the House of Representatives passed a bill to restart the dormant National Scenic Byways Program, while companion legislation was introduced in the Senate.

"We are thrilled with Congress' support for scenic byways," said Mark Falzone, president of Scenic America. "The National Scenic Byways Program is a proven winner: it protects places with historic, scenic and cultural significance and contributes to local economies by promoting them as destinations."


"As Rhode Islanders know, our state is home to some of the most beautiful scenic byways in the country," said Rep. Cicilline. "This bipartisan bill will allow us to capitalize on our state's natural beauty and generate millions of dollars in new economic activity. I'm pleased that this bill passed the House today and I look forward to seeing it signed into law."

"Louisiana's historical byways weave through her natural beauty and help tell the story of our history and unique culture. They are critical to preserving our heritage, growing our economy for the future and caring for our rural communities," said Rep. Graves.

The Senate bill, S. 349, also enjoys bipartisan support and is sponsored by Sen. Susan Collins, Republican of Maine, and Senator Ben Cardin, Democrat of Maryland.

"I am proud that my home state of Maine boasts not only three National Scenic Byways, but also the Acadia All-American Road. These roadways provide Mainers and tourists alike with spectacular views and memorable experiences, while at the same time spurring much-needed economic activity in the surrounding areas," said Senator Collins. "The National Scenic Byways Program represents a true win-win scenario by protecting precious corridors and providing tangible benefits for local communities."

"Maryland is home to 18 designated byways, and the reopening of this program will be beneficial to future development and maintenance of these important routes," said Senator Cardin. "This program helps direct visitors to areas of interest along our scenic byways, and generates revenue for the surrounding communities."

"We applaud the exemplary leadership of Rep. Cicilline and Rep. Graves resulting in today's passage of scenic byways legislation in the House," said Falzone. "And we extend our sincere appreciation to Senator Collins and Senator Cardin for their visionary support of our country's scenic roadways and rural economies. We look forward to helping pass their bill in the Senate."

Since its inception in 1991 the program has bestowed the National Scenic Byway designation on 150 roads around the country, but the last round of designations occurred ten years ago and Congress officially pulled support for the program in 2012.

National Scenic Byways have been shown to generate significant economic activity for nearby communities, many of which are small and rural in nature. A 2010 report from the University of Minnesota showed a $21.6 million economic impact from traveler spending along both the Paul Bunyan Scenic Byway and nearby Lake Country Scenic Byway. A 2013 study of Scenic Byway 12 in Utah found that the byway generated nearly $13 million annually in local spending.

A recent survey found that 44 state scenic byways across the country are prepared to take advantage of the legislation as soon as the program is reopened. "The National Scenic Byway designation means these roads are sought out by both domestic and international travelers, and it's critical that we provide local byways with the opportunity to seek the national recognition and reap the well-established benefits," said Falzone.

Scenic America encourages the public to reach out to their Members of Congress in support of this bill by visiting: www.scenic.org/byways

Allied organization statements on passage of H.R. 831 and introduction of S. 349:

"The American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) strongly supports the long-overdue revival of the National Scenic Byways Program nominations process, which will reinvigorate one of this country's most important programs for connecting Americans to the scenic and cultural treasures of the nation. Landscape architects, as stewards of the built and natural environments, welcome today's action in the House of Representatives and hope that it will soon be matched in the Senate so that this remarkable collection of roadways can be expanded and the benefits of Scenic Byway designation can be brought to even more places whose scenic, cultural, and historic qualities represent the best of American life."
"As part of the coalition that helped create the National Scenic Byways Program in 1991, the American Motorcyclist Association is excited about today's passage of H.R. 831, the Reviving America's Scenic Byways Act of 2019. Today's vote moves us one step closer to reopening the National Scenic Byways Program, which has preserved and enhanced many motorcyclists' favorite roads like the Blue Ridge Parkway, stretching from North Carolina to Virginia, and the Beartooth Highway between Montana and Wyoming. The AMA thanks Congressman David Cicilline for sponsoring this important legislation."

Wayne Allard
VP of Government Relations
American Motorcyclist Association

"We applaud the leadership of Representatives Cicilline and Graves in championing legislation to revitalize the Scenic Byway program. For over 100 years, the GCA has embraced roadside beauty and the need to enhance and protect the scenic character of our communities and countryside. The Scenic Byway program will help limit the visual blight of billboards while providing economic opportunities for tourism and recreation important to sustaining small towns."

Anne Neal Petri
President
The Garden Club of America

"We applaud Congressional action to revive a program of great importance to those touring our wonderful nation and seeking its stories -- historic, natural and cultural. Byways are the roads Americans love and have been championed by Charles Kuralt, George H.W. Bush, Jay Rockefeller, Jim Oberstar and many more. New byways offer economic sustainability to rural communities and connect those communities with public lands and waters."

Derrick A. Crandall
Outdoor Solutions USA

"So many of America's roadways, in particular, the designated Scenic Byways, tell the story of history and culture of the Native Americans. There are still so many more scenic routes to establish just as there are many untold Native American stories yet to tell."

Camille Ferguson
Executive Director
American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association