

The Saturday

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OPINION

EDITORIALS

A natural for a national park

The 77-foot-high Great Falls in Paterson is more than an outstanding scenic attraction in a densely developed urban area. The Great Falls and the land around it are one of the birthplaces of the industrial revolution in America and, as such, a national historical treasure.

So it is promising that the movement to designate the falls and the surrounding area as a national park is gathering steam. Rep. Bill Pascrell Jr., the

Democrat who once was mayor of Paterson, has been spearheading the effort, and he is making encouraging progress with the House Natural Resources Committee.

Inclusion in the national park system would bring many building and other upgrades, attracting far more visitors to the falls and surrounding buildings. The Na-



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The Great Falls in Paterson deserves new national status.

tional Park Service last year rejected the idea, concerned about the estimated \$21 million cost.

Congress can overrule the Park Service, and it should do so here. President Bush has increased the service's budget this year and called for greater funding in the future. Promoting the Great Falls from its current status as a national historic district to a full national park would pay historical and cultural dividends that far outweigh the cost.