

**Testimony of
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The Paterson Great Falls National Park Act of 2007, H.R. 189

**before the
House Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands
Legislative Hearing
U.S. House of Representatives**

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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee,

On behalf of the New Jersey Community Development Corporation (NJCDC), I am submitting this testimony to supplement my statement at today's Hearing on the Paterson National Historical Park legislation. My name is Leonard Zax and I am a partner in the law firm of Latham & Watkins LLP. My colleagues in our New Jersey and Washington offices take special pride in our *pro bono* representation of NJCDC, a private nonprofit organization whose mission is to improve the quality of life for Paterson's citizens.

NJCDC joins the many organizations and individuals across the country who support making the Paterson Great Falls National Historic District a unit of the National Park System. (See Exhibit 1.) The National Trust for Historic Preservation, Sierra Club, National Parks Conservation Association, and NAACP are among the organizations that support a Paterson National Park. Latino and African-American, Muslim and Jewish, Catholic and Baptist citizens support this cause. Corporate executives and laborers, environmentalists and property rights advocates, bankers and community activists, scholars and schoolchildren, historic preservationists and developers, New Jersey's leading newspapers, and the *New York Times* support a Paterson National Park. The list of individual supporters includes professors at every university in the Ivy League and former Cabinet members in the Administrations of Presidents Gerald R. Ford, George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush.

Three generations of my family came of age in Paterson during the twentieth century. My grandparents settled in Paterson in the early 1900s, coming to America from Eastern Europe to seek freedom and opportunities. One of my grandfathers worked in a silk mill at a time that Paterson was known through the world as the Silk City. My other grandfather built houses for immigrant families, including his own. My father, a lawyer who chaired the local bar association committee on immigration, for many years presented a copy of the Bill of Rights to new citizens who settled in Paterson seeking a better life for their families.

Alexander Hamilton and the Paterson Great Falls

On a special Bicentennial visit to Paterson, President Gerald R. Ford outlined the unique place of the Paterson Great Falls in American History:

But most of all, far more important than anything else, the industrial history of the Great Falls goes back to the very first years of our United States, and this engineering achievement embodied our most basic political and economic goals—independence and prosperity. The Society for the Establishment of Useful Manufactures was stimulated by our first Secretary of the Treasury, Alexander Hamilton, to use Paterson as a place to encourage America's economic independence and demonstrate the value of American industry.

Before Paterson was much more than a name on a piece of paper, Hamilton saw it as the cradle of American industrial might. The Great Falls represents the first attempt within the United States to harness the entire power of a major river. The sheer number of different industries that were established here make this site unique.

In 1792 Alexander Hamilton announced to Congress and the American people that at the Great Falls in New Jersey he would found the City of Paterson to secure the new nation's economic independence and begin transforming its rural agrarian economy based in slavery into a modern economy based in freedom. Though today we often take America's economic power and its liberties as given, in 1792 neither was guaranteed. Hamilton believed that political independence was only the first step toward achieving economic independence, and he sought to break Britain's manufacturing hold on America. Hamilton alone among America's founders championed the spirit of enterprise that would transform a Third World nation into the greatest economic power ever known.

Hamilton envisioned an economy driven by the labor of free men and women rather than slaves, and a society that rewarded hard work rather than inherited privilege. Although his economic and political legacy is now secure, the fate of the Paterson Great Falls Historic District—so central to that legacy—is much less certain. A *New York Times* editorial endorsing the Paterson National Park highlights the fact that Paterson's "contribution to American urbanization, industrialization, social justice and the arts is as profound as it is, regrettably, forgotten or ignored." (Exhibit 2)

We invited more than 25 preeminent historians, historic preservation experts, specialists in water power engineering, and former government officials to analyze the unique narratives and resources that a national historical park in Paterson would add to the National Park System. The group includes the preeminent Hamilton biographers of our time, distinguished former Smithsonian curators, the former chief of the National Park Service Historic American Engineering Record, and distinguished scholars from such universities as Yale, Harvard, NYU, Brown, the University of Massachusetts, Michigan Tech, and the University of Arizona.

These experts conclude that Paterson's representation of Hamilton's vision of the American economy is a critical theme of American history not adequately represented in the National Park System or anywhere in the United States. The scholars believe that the Paterson Great Falls National Historic District is the best place to recognize the importance of Hamilton's vision for all Americans. Many of these scholars are also submitting testimony for the record.

A Paterson National Historical Park would include a combination of exceptional natural and cultural resources that illustrate each stage in the creation of a modern industrial economy based on freedom. As all of the members of the New Jersey Congressional Delegation point out in a letter to the Secretary of the Interior, "New Jersey's Great Falls is the only National Historic District that includes both a National Natural Resource and a National Historic Landmark." (Exhibit 3)

The Great Falls provides much more than stunning natural beauty for a National Park Service unit in Paterson. As a colonel fighting in the Revolutionary War, Hamilton met with the Marquis de Lafayette and George Washington at the Great Falls, where General Washington later established his headquarters for a time. After the war, Hamilton chose to begin implementing his industrial plan at the Great Falls because the awesome force of the Great Falls would provide the necessary power for planned mills and industry. The Great Falls was central to a Founding Father's plan for an urban and industrial America, whose security would be bolstered by its economic independence and whose modern economy would provide opportunities for all.

Hamilton commissioned Pierre L'Enfant—who had just completed his plan for Washington, D.C.—to design an unprecedented water power system for Paterson, including raceways that would transport water power and goods to mill sites. Around the Great Falls, the innovative water power system—and many factory buildings built later—document each stage of America's progression from a rural agrarian society to a leading global economy.

Paterson's water power system is the only one that is directly tied to the Founding Father who set America on the path of its industrial development. As the National Parks Conservation Association points out, "No other natural wonder in America has played a more important role in our nation's historic quest for freedom and prosperity." (Exhibit 4)

The distinguished former Smithsonian curator Robert Vogel writes:

Paterson is the one place in America where it is possible directly to connect the 18th century vision of a great manufacturing nation, articulated by one of our Founding Fathers, with the actual fruits of that vision in the following centuries.

Paterson's Great Falls Historic District includes a combination of natural resources and buildings not represented anywhere else in America. In Paterson there is a Pantheon of important historical events in American industry: the Great Falls that inspired Hamilton, the L'Enfant plan of hydraulic raceways harnessing the power of a major river, the initial Colt Revolver plant, the Holland submarine, the greatest grouping of locomotive builders in America, and the largest silk-producing center in the world.

Ron Chernow, author of the acclaimed biography of Alexander Hamilton, explains that Paterson “became the home for this industrial laboratory, this futuristic city, this model of what America could be.” Chernow emphasizes that Hamilton did not seek to create an industrial monopoly in Paterson and instead “hoped through the ‘spirit of imitation,’ the Society would spawn comparable domestic businesses.” Hamilton’s vision of an economically independent and industrial America with opportunities for all, diverse industries, and international trade succeeded in Paterson well before any other place in America.

Paterson is a unique landmark in American economic planning. Brown University Professor Steven Lubar, former Curator of Industrial History at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History, writes: “Paterson represents the origin of American industrial policy; it is where national politics, economics, and industry were first joined. It is the first chapter in a story that came to define the American industrial system.”

Hamilton wrote the charter for the Society for the Establishment of Useful Manufactures (S.U.M.), a new form of corporate business entity, with broad powers to continue through successive generations and economic cycles. Hamilton foresaw that initial problems likely would challenge the enterprise, as shown by his letters and other documents that are still in Paterson. Hamilton biographer Ron Chernow writes that when the S.U.M. faced the national financial crisis of 1792:

For several days in early 1792, Hamilton huddled with the Society directors to hammer out a new program. “Perseverance in almost any plan is better than fickleness and fluctuation,” he was to lecture one S.U.M. superintendent with what could almost have been his personal motto.

Following Hamilton’s leadership, the S.U.M. did not go bankrupt, nor did it dissolve. Instead, the S.U.M. took steps to cut potential losses and adapted to the downturn in the economy. As the economy turned around, it did not take long for many new factories to be built in Paterson, using sites and power provided by the S.U.M.

Harvard Professor Joseph Stancliffe Davis wrote in his history of the S.U.M. that “the Society’s stock became a highly profitable investment and the corporation proved itself no insignificant factor in promoting the development of a ‘considerable manufacturing town.’” As Professor Davis wrote in 1917, the S.U.M. “is one of the very few companies of the time to survive the vicissitudes of a century and maintain an unbroken existence down to the present day.” Over one hundred and fifty years after Hamilton founded the City, the WPA Federal Writers Project concluded that Paterson “is one of the few American cities that have turned out almost exactly as they were planned.”

Hamilton Achieved Diverse Manufactures in Paterson

Just as Hamilton envisioned, Paterson achieved manufacturing success by becoming an extraordinary center of invention and a major producer of a wide variety of goods. As the author Christopher Norwood writes:

In Paterson people did not just invent; they tried everything—a repeating revolver, a submarine, and airplane that could fly across the Atlantic. And Paterson did not just manufacture; it produced articles that redefined the

limits of life. It is impossible to think of any other city whose products cut so deeply into the texture of the United States and not only transformed its national character, but revolutionized American relations with the world.

By 1816, Paterson was a national leader in the production of many of the articles Hamilton listed as in his *Report on Manufactures*—cotton, sailcloth, flax, hemp, paper, nails, steel, iron, and silk. From 1850-1860, Paterson's Rogers Locomotive Company was the America's largest producer of locomotives, and Paterson produced more locomotives than any city in the nation. Later in the nineteenth century, Paterson became America's largest manufacturer of silk goods. In the twentieth century, Paterson's Curtiss-Wright Corporation produced nearly 140,000 aircraft engines, surpassing all other American manufacturers.

Hamilton Achieved Economic Independence in Paterson

Hamilton believed that the United States must produce enough of its own goods to avoid reliance on foreign products, particularly for the military. In the first decades of the nineteenth century, John Colt, Deputy Director of the S.U.M., invented a form of cotton cloth that did not mildew and contributed to America's military self-sufficiency by manufacturing the sailcloth for every ship in the United States Navy. Samuel Colt invented and first manufactured the Colt revolver in Paterson.

Paterson was the birthplace of the first submarine, and the City's role in American and world military history would continue into the twentieth century. During World War II, Jimmy Doolittle raided Tokyo in daylight in planes powered by Curtiss-Wright engines made in Paterson, and the *Enola Gay* bomber ended the war on a flight powered by engines from Paterson. Paterson produced a wide variety of goods, securing America's economic independence and helping make the nation a leader in international commerce.

A partial list of Paterson inventions and manufactures includes:

- First continuous roll of paper;
- Colt revolver;
- Sailcloth for all of America's Navy ships beginning in the 1830s;
- More locomotives than any city in the nation;
- The first submarine;
- The aircraft engine for the first trans-Atlantic flight;
- And more silk goods than any city in America, earning Paterson the nickname, the Silk City.

Hamilton's economic vision for America was first realized in Paterson, and the Great Falls National Historic District represents Hamilton's vision of economic independence in a way that no other place in America does or can.

Hamilton Created Opportunities for All in Paterson

Hamilton worked to create an economy in Paterson that would allow immigrants to share directly in America's boundless opportunities. As Ron Chernow observes in his biography of Hamilton:

His America would be a meritocracy of infinite variety, with a diversified marketplace absorbing people from all nations and backgrounds . . . Hamilton's ideal economy is devoid of the futile barbarities of the Southern plantations. Hamilton's list of the advantages of manufacturing has a quintessentially American ring: "Additional employment to classes of the community not ordinarily engaged in the business. The promoting of emigration from foreign countries. The furnishing of greater scope for the diversity of talents and dispositions which discriminate men from each other."

Paterson is the best place to interpret Hamilton's industrial vision because Paterson actually provided the very opportunities that Hamilton sought. Some Paterson manufacturers were among the local visionaries of the larger national movement that became known as the Underground Railroad. Frederick Douglass wrote in his autobiography of escaping through Paterson following the John Brown uprising in Harper's Ferry.

The great social historian Herbert Gutman systematically studied the leading millowners in Paterson and concluded that "the rags-to-riches promise was not a mere myth in Paterson." Professor Gutman summarized the nineteenth century record:

Scientific American, groping for a simple sociological generalization about these men, praised Paterson's early enterprisers in these words: "In the eastern states, flourishing cities have been built up by corporations of wealthy capitalists In Paterson, it was different. With few exceptions, almost every manufacturer started, financially, at zero, enlarging his establishment as the quicksilver expanded in his purse." *Scientific American* was not guilty of mouthing abstract rhetoric or just putting forth a paean of traditional tribute to an invisible hero, the "self-made man." Instead, it accurately described the successful locomotive, iron, and machinery manufacturers of the era, and what it wrote applied as well to a group in 1840 and 1880 as in 1859.

Changing Role of the United States in the World Community

NPS Guidelines require that studies of potential new national parks analyze the "multiple layers of history encapsulated within each resource." The NPS Guidelines describe the particular importance of potential new national parks that represent "the interaction between the United States and the world community."

Hamilton recognized the extraordinary opportunity silk production presented to the United States economy. His *Report on Manufactures* encouraged silk production, a recommendation that would increase America's involvement in international commerce. As early as 1794, the S.U.M. authorized the culture of mulberry trees in Paterson to promote the cultivation of silk. In the nineteenth century, industrialists would make Paterson the "Silk City," as John Ryle and other manufacturers moved to make Paterson, for some years, the largest manufacturer of silk goods in the world. By 1900 some 175 silk manufacturing companies in Paterson employed over 20,000 silk workers.

Silk holds a very special place in American and world history. Paterson's significant role in the silk manufacturing and global trade formed a connection between the City and the Asian,

Middle Eastern, and European cultures that similarly cherished silk. As Richard Kurin of the Smithsonian Institution explains:

Silk became both a component and a symbol of this cultural diffusion. It was seen as a valuable index of civilization with regard to religious ritual, kingship, artistic production, and commercial activity. Silk stood for the higher things in life. It was a valuable, traded commodity, as well as a historical medium of exchange. Silk both epitomized and played a major role in the early development of what we now characterize as a global economic and cultural system.

In the late nineteenth century, historians began to describe the route of the global trade of silk as the “Silk Road.” In recent years, historians at the Smithsonian and universities around the world have expanded the traditional view of the Silk Road and have noted that the historical connection between East and West exists to this day. In 1998, the cellist Yo-Yo Ma created the Silk Road Project, celebrating how people shared art and music along the modern Silk Road and promoting further cultural collaboration between Asia, Europe, and the Americas. The Aga Khan, Imam of the Shia Imami Ismaili Muslims and direct descendant of Muhammad, has contributed generously to the Silk Road Project’s funding, particularly in the Muslim nations.

The Smithsonian organized—and the Park Service cosponsored—the 2002 Folklife Festival to celebrate the modern Silk Road. The Aga Khan and Yo-Yo Ma joined Secretary of State Colin Powell in opening the festival. As Richard Kennedy of the Smithsonian Institution observed during the Folklife Festival:

The Silk Road has extended to the United States and, since the tragic events of September 11, understanding that connection clearly has become more important. There is no better time, then, to learn more about the roots of this vital connection and to celebrate the long-standing relationships that have existed between east and west and north and south.

A Paterson National Historical Park would preserve and present a station on this contemporary Silk Road, providing a unique opportunity to connect with other cultures and build trust between and within cultures of the global Silk Road. In testimony submitted for this Hearing, a leader of the Islamic community in Paterson explains why Muslim Americans support a Paterson National Historical Park. Mr. Mohamed El-Filali notes that a national park in Paterson would help America “reach out and attempt to understand how other cultures can affect and enrich America’s culture.”

The National Parks Conservation Association points out that “Paterson can become the first NPS unit with strong Muslim American support in a city that has the second largest number of Muslims in any American city.” Dr. Alvin Felzenberg, a political scientist who is an expert on New Jersey history, explains that Paterson is a station on the Silk Road not just because of its history as “Silk City” but also because “large numbers of Islamic citizens continue to work in Paterson textile businesses, coming from places like Damascus to Paterson because of textile manufacturing in both cities.” Dr. Felzenberg, who also served as Principal Spokesman for the 9/11 Commission, writes that a National Park Service unit in Paterson would create a connection between Muslims and the Park Service while promoting valuable cultural interchanges between Muslims and other Americans.

Civic Engagement

Many citizens who today feel little or no connection with our national parks and the Founding Fathers will find much greater meaning within Paterson's authenticity and diversity. The proposed Paterson National Historical Park legislation has captured the imagination and spirit of a diverse group of citizens.

- Latino citizens support the Paterson National Park because Hamilton was such a powerful advocate for the view that immigration builds the nation and because of his role in helping to spread the cause of freedom to the Spanish colonies in the Americas.
- African-Americans recognize Hamilton's vigorous fight against slavery was an essential part of his inclusive view of how all Americans would benefit from the growing modern economy that would begin in Paterson. African-Americans praise the inclusion in the Paterson National Park of Hinchliffe Stadium—the landmark home of the N.Y. Black Yankees and the N.Y. Cubans in baseball's Negro Leagues—that was sited and planned by the renowned Olmsted Brothers firm right next to the Great Falls.
- Islamic citizens support the Paterson National Park as a continuation of the Silk Road that united their homelands in Central Asia with China and the West. They note that Paterson became the largest silk manufacturing center of the world at the end of the 19th century—making the Silk City a station on the modern Silk Road.

Need for National Park Service in Paterson

The record clearly supports the creation of a Paterson National Historical Park. The Park Service's own cost estimates demonstrate that the State of New Jersey is *not* providing sufficient funding to preserve the Great Falls Historic District and present its resources to the American people and visitors from abroad. As Governor Jon Corzine writes to the Secretary of the Interior: "The State of New Jersey alone cannot preserve and protect the Great Falls National Historic District and properly present it to the public without a National Park Service unit in Paterson."

Conclusion

In Paterson, Alexander Hamilton began the economic experiment that secured America's future and launched the American dream. It was in Paterson that Alexander Hamilton created an economy requiring not slavery but freedom, rewarding not social status but fine work, and promoting not discrimination against some but opportunities for all.

We urge members of this Subcommittee to support the legislation to create the Paterson National Historical Park during this session of Congress.

This concludes my prepared remarks, Mr. Chairman. I would be pleased to answer any questions you or other committee members have regarding the proposed legislation.