

Freedom's Way National Heritage Area

**Statement by Congressman John Olver to the House Subcommittee on National
Parks, Forest and Public Lands on H. R. 1297
The Freedom's Way National Heritage Area
*July 12, 2007***

New England has long been associated with our nation's formative years, major social and intellectual movements, and of course, great natural beauty. The area that comprises the proposed Freedom's Way Heritage Area, which is included in this bill, has provided the backdrop for many of the events and movements that shaped America.

Freedom's Way includes thirty-seven communities in Massachusetts and eight in New Hampshire that are historically rich. Freedom's Way chronicles and celebrates the Revolutionary War stories of Lexington and Concord. Additionally, the free religious expression and social movements of the Shakers and Transcendentalists had their roots in the region. The area also hosted the social justice and the social criticism development found in the writings of Emerson, Hawthorn, Alcott and Fuller. And finally, the movements for the abolition of slavery, women's rights, and environmental conservation all have roots within the boundary of Freedom's Way.

The proposed initiative embodies the National Park Service's criteria for National Heritage Areas. It will conserve historic, cultural, scenic and natural resources for the benefit of current and future generations. The idea has received widespread support from local residents and has the support for every Member of the House whose district includes a portion of the proposed Area.

With this designation, the communities included will benefit from better resources to create a cohesive learning experience, using the natural setting and historical and cultural artifacts to tell the story of American Democracy.

I urge all of my colleagues to support this important legislation.

** Congressman John Olver's full testimony before the House Subcommittee, July 2007*