

the Catoctin Center for Regional Studies, has undertaken a thorough review of the feasibility of establishing the first Civil War State Battlefield in Maryland; and

WHEREAS, The Civil War was one of the defining events in United States history; and

WHEREAS, The Battle of South Mountain was the first battle of the Civil War fought on Maryland soil; and

WHEREAS, The Union showing at South Mountain and two days later at Antietam enabled President Lincoln to issue the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation; and

WHEREAS, The Task Force discovered that the State of Maryland owns 2,600 acres of land on South Mountain where the Battle was fought and has purchased conservation easements for an additional 1,400 acres of land relevant to the Battle of South Mountain; and

WHEREAS, The Civil War Sites Advisory Commission has designated South Mountain as a Priority I battlefield; and

WHEREAS, The Task Force report of January 19, 2000, strongly recommends that a State Battlefield be created at South Mountain; now, therefore,

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article - Natural Resources

SUBTITLE 18. SOUTH MOUNTAIN BATTLEFIELD.

5-1801.

(A) THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FINDS THAT:

(1) ON SEPTEMBER 14, 1862, THE UNION AND CONFEDERATE ARMIES FOUGHT A MAJOR BATTLE ALONG A SEVEN MILE STRETCH OF SOUTH MOUNTAIN, WHICH WAS THE FIRST BATTLE OF THE CIVIL WAR FOUGHT ON MARYLAND SOIL.

(2) THE SOUTH MOUNTAIN BATTLEFIELD HAS BEEN RECOGNIZED AS ONE OF THE 11 MOST ENDANGERED HISTORIC PLACES IN AMERICA FOR 2000.

(3) IN ORDER TO PRESERVE THE LAND WHERE THE BATTLE WAS FOUGHT AND TO PROVIDE THE PUBLIC WITH ACCESS TO APPRECIATE THE LAND WHERE THE BATTLE WAS FOUGHT, IT IS DECLARED TO BE THE PUBLIC POLICY OF THIS STATE TO ESTABLISH THE FIRST CIVIL WAR STATE BATTLEFIELD AT SOUTH MOUNTAIN AND TO PROVIDE THE AUTHORITY AND RESOURCES TO DEVELOP AND OPERATE THE BATTLEFIELD.

(B) (1) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL MANAGE THE DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATION OF THE SOUTH MOUNTAIN BATTLEFIELD.