

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Rob Wittman (VA-1) today lauded the announcement that Hampton, Virginia’s own Fort Monroe, will now be designated as a National Monument under the Antiquities Act. Wittman worked hand in hand with the Virginia Congressional Delegation to encourage this action by the Administration. The designation will ensure the preservation and protection of the historic features of Fort Monroe.

“Today’s designation of Fort Monroe as a National Monument reinforces the historical importance of Fort Monroe, and guarantees a promising future for a site that bears so much historical significance not only in the Tidewater region but our country as a whole,” Wittman said. “I am proud to be part of an effort that included folks from the local communities, the Governor’s office, and the federal level.”

Wittman [joined in a letter to President Barack Obama](#) earlier this year, along with Reps. Scott Rigell, Bobby Scott, and J. Randy Forbes, encouraging a swift designation of Fort Monroe within the National Park system.

For more information on Fort Monroe, visit http://www.hampton.gov/fort_monroe/.

Background – Courtesy of The White House:

President Obama today will sign a Proclamation to designate Fort Monroe a National Monument under the Antiquities Act. Until recently, Fort Monroe was the third-oldest Army post in continuous active service, and is integral to the history of slavery, the Civil War, and the U.S. military.

First exercised by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1906 to designate Devil's Tower in Wyoming as the first national monument, the Antiquities Act has been used by 14 presidents since 1906 to protect some of the most unique natural and historic features in America, such as the Grand Canyon, the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. Today marks the first time President Obama has used this authority under the Antiquities Act

According to an economic analysis commissioned by the Fort Monroe Authority in 2009, the implementation of the Fort Monroe Reuse Plan - the centerpiece of which envisions the preservation of the majority of buildings located within the 570-acre National Historic Landmark District as well as significant landscapes and viewsheds – will help create nearly 3,000 jobs in Virginia.

Fort Monroe, a historic fort in Virginia's Tidewater region, played a pivotal role in the history of slavery in the United States. Built between 1819 and 1834, Fort Monroe has occupied a strategic coastal defensive position since the earliest days of the Virginia Colony. It was the place where Dutch traders first brought enslaved Africans in 1619. During the Civil War, the fort remained in Union possession and became a place for escaped slaves to find refuge. Fort

Monroe was the site of General Benjamin Butler's "Contraband Decision" in 1861, which provided a pathway to freedom for thousands of enslaved people during the Civil War and served as a forerunner of President Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation of 1863.

According to the National Parks and Conservation Association study in 2006 each federal dollar invested in national parks generates at least four dollars of economic value to the public. National parks are responsible for \$13.3 billion dollars of local, private-sector economic activity nationwide, supporting 267,000 private-sector jobs. There are currently 21 national park units located in Virginia; Fort Monroe would be the 22nd and the 396th nationwide.

Congressman Rob Wittman represents the First District of Virginia. He serves on the House Natural Resources Committee and the House Armed Services Committee where he is the Chairman of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.