RICE INTRODUCES BILL TO PRESERVE SITES RELATED TO AVIATION HISTORY ON LONG ISLAND

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U.S. Representative Kathleen Rice along with local aviation enthusiasts, introduced a legislation to preserve significant sites related to aviation history on Long Island at the Cradle of Aviation Museum on Thursday.

Under the Long Island Aviation History Act, the Secretary of the Interior will be conducting a special study to evaluate the national significance of Long Island's aviation history and assess ways to preserve the significant historic sites.

Some ways the sites will be preserved include: formally designating parts of Long Island as a unit of the National Parks Service and by identifying sites that could qualify for designation as National Historic Landmarks.

The bill also directs the Secretary to evaluate ways to enhance historical research, education and

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public awareness of Long Island’s aviation history.

The act was first introduced by Rice’s predecessor, former Congresswoman Carolyn McCarthy, who developed the legislation after the idea was proposed by a resident of the fourth congressional district and National Parks Service volunteer named Adam Sackowitz.

“Long Island has played a major role in the development of our nation’s aviation industry, helping it grow from an obscure sport into the booming industry and critical national resource that it is today,” Rice said. “That history is an important piece of our identity here on Long Island, and it’s crucial that we always remember it – not only to honor the efforts of those who came before us, but to inspire us to follow their lead and keep working to ensure that Long Island remains a center of innovation and ingenuity.”

Rice was joined by members of Long Island’s aviation community, including Jane Gilman, whose late mother Peggy served as one of the Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASPs) during World War II, flying completed P-47 Thunderbolts from Republic to airfields near ports along the coast, where they would be disassembled and shipped overseas; Julie Lauria-Blum, a WASP historian and a curator at the Cradle of Aviation Museum; and members of the Republic Airport Historical Society.

The bill highlights three specific sites including the Hempstead Plains, or “Cradle of Aviation”, which housed three major airfields in the early 20th century – Roosevelt Field, Curtiss Field, and Mitchel Field.

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