

**Statement for the Record-House Natural Resource Committee Virtual Member Day
5/6/2021**

On April 14, I introduced H.R. 2512 to amend the National Trails System Act to designate the Chisholm National Historic Trail and Western National Historic Trail. Designating these trails is more than just noting paths through the Great Plains but showcasing the historical significance of the people who traveled the more than 1,300 miles through multiple states, and their way of life.

The earliest history of Wichita begins with Jesse Chisholm and J.R. Mead establishing trading posts at the confluence of the Arkansas and Little Arkansas Rivers where Wichita stands today. The Chisholm Trail served as a major cattle trail following the Civil War, playing a critical role in shaping the midwestern economy. Throughout its history, it is estimated that cowboys drove more than five million cattle up the trail. Beyond the economic value the trails provided, it also reinforced the cowboy culture of the American West.

Based on a feasibility study that resulted in overwhelming support, this bill will honor midwestern authentic cowboy culture while ensuring that landowners are protected. It was important to me that this legislation has the strongest private property protections of any historic trail designated in the U.S.

Overall, this bill contains ironclad protections for private landowners that would prevent any administration from infringing on property rights. Provisions resulting from previous court cases to guarantee private property protections appear throughout the text. This legislation does not seek to acquire any private lands and would require consent of the landowner to administer any portion of the trails on private land at all, and permission granted by landowners may be rescinded at any time. This bill specifies that establishment of these trails does not prohibit, hinder, or disrupt the development, production, or transmission of energy.

The history of these trails serves as a unique reminder of the unbridled spirit and boundless potential of the American west. Right now, we need the Chisholm Trail's reminder of who we are as Americans—undaunted individuals with vigor, tenacity, and resolve. I hope that you will join me in supporting H.R. 2512.