



## 104TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

### State of Illinois

2025 and 2026

SB1417

Introduced 1/31/2025, by Sen. Steve McClure

#### SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

New Act

Creates the New Salem Preservation Commission Act. Provides that the New Salem Preservation Commission is created within the Department of Natural Resources for certain purposes related to Lincoln's New Salem State Historic Site. Provides for 13 members, including members of the General Assembly and others, with the President of the New Salem Lincoln League as chairperson. Provides that the Department shall provide support to the Commission. Provides that the members of the Commission shall serve without compensation but shall be reimbursed for reasonable and necessary expenses from funds appropriated for that purpose. Provides that the volunteer coordinator at Lincoln's New Salem State Historic Site shall submit an annual report to the Commission. Provides that the Commission shall convene and meet at the call of the chairperson and shall meet once a year to tour and assess the Site. Provides that the Commission shall compile an annual report for the General Assembly. Makes findings. Effective immediately.

LRB104 03331 BDA 13353 b

1 AN ACT concerning State government.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**  
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the New  
5 Salem Preservation Commission Act.

6 Section 5. Findings. The General Assembly finds that:

7 (1) Lincoln's New Salem State Historic Site provides  
8 historic, interactive interpretation at the reconstructed  
9 1830s village where Abraham Lincoln lived, which at one  
10 time, when it was a premier site, hosted more than 400,000  
11 visitors per year from around the world.

12 (2) Lincoln's New Salem State Historic Site has  
13 experienced extensive deterioration of the reconstructed  
14 log homes, roofs, buildings, foundations, chimneys,  
15 fences, steps, footbridge, flatboat, cemetery, and the  
16 iconic Grist Mill.

17 (3) Lincoln's New Salem State Historic Site attracts  
18 students on field trips, volunteers, campers, hikers,  
19 canoeing enthusiasts, kayakers, college interns, cyclists,  
20 children to the Pioneer Day Camp, historians, visitors  
21 from around the world, and descendants of those who lived,  
22 worked and are buried there.

23 (4) Lincoln's New Salem State Historic Site serves as

1 a living history museum with volunteer interpreters in the  
2 homes, provides music festivals including the Traditional  
3 Music Festivals, concessions, a gift shop, Theater in the  
4 Park, campgrounds, exercise areas, trails, Summer Frolic,  
5 Independence Day Celebration where the Declaration of  
6 Independence is read, Boy Scout jamborees including hikes  
7 that trace Lincoln's footsteps to Springfield during the  
8 Annual Abraham Lincoln Pilgrimage, Fall Festival and the  
9 popular Annual Fall Candlelight Walk.

10 (5) Since the 1980s, the New Salem Lincoln League has  
11 invested more than \$1,000,000 in site improvement and  
12 programs, such as cultural and educational programs in the  
13 village and outdoor theater, production costs for the  
14 Visitor Center orientation video and a new  
15 state-of-the-art system to replace the Center's aging  
16 audio-visual equipment. The League has worked with Theater  
17 in the Park, which attracts over 10,000 visitors a year,  
18 funding new seating and a new sound board. When the  
19 village structures needed new roofs, the League bought the  
20 traditional wood shingles and treated wood to replace  
21 cabin porches and steps. As New Salem's iconic statues  
22 have begun to age, the League has paid to have them  
23 professionally cleaned, treated and restored. Site staff  
24 requested the League replace lighting systems in the  
25 Visitors Center and Visitors Parking Lot. The League  
26 funded new LED lighting which saved the Site thousands of

1 dollars. The League has funded the veterinarian care and  
2 transportation for the Site's animals, including the  
3 purchase of a horse, horse trailer, feed, and hay. The  
4 League provides supplies and materials for volunteer  
5 efforts, such as clothing, materials for demonstrations,  
6 candles for the annual candlelight tour, and meals during  
7 the annual candlelight tour for all volunteers and staff.  
8 The League partners with the Illinois College Explorer  
9 program to fund up to 6 college summer interns.

10 Section 10. New Salem Preservation Commission created.

11 (a) The New Salem Preservation Commission is created  
12 within the Department of Natural Resources for the following  
13 purposes:

14 (1) to monitor and recommend repairs and maintenance  
15 for the structures, signage, statues, overall condition of  
16 the grounds, and accessibility at the Site;

17 (2) to make recommendations for volunteer coordination  
18 efforts, including interactions and communications with  
19 current and potential volunteers; and

20 (3) to make recommendations regarding guidelines for  
21 volunteer eligibility and retention.

22 (b) The New Salem Preservation Commission shall consist of  
23 the following members, who shall serve without compensation:

24 (1) the President of the New Salem Lincoln League, who  
25 shall serve as chairperson of the Commission;

1           (2) one member from the Senate, appointed by the  
2           President of the Senate;

3           (3) one member from the House of Representatives,  
4           appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;

5           (4) one member from the Senate, appointed by the  
6           Minority Leader of the Senate;

7           (5) one member from the House of Representatives,  
8           appointed by the Minority Leader of the House of  
9           Representatives;

10          (6) one expert in 1830s log cabin construction and  
11          maintenance, appointed by the President of the New Salem  
12          Lincoln League;

13          (7) two members who are representatives of and are  
14          from the community in and around Menard County surrounding  
15          Lincoln's New Salem State Historic Site, appointed by the  
16          President of the New Salem Lincoln League;

17          (8) one member who is a representative of the Division  
18          of Historic Preservation of the Department of Natural  
19          Resources, appointed by the Division Manager of Historic  
20          Preservation of the Department of Natural Resources;

21          (9) one member who is a representative of the Illinois  
22          State Museum, appointed by the Director of the Illinois  
23          State Museum;

24          (10) one member who is a representative of the Abraham  
25          Lincoln Association, appointed by the President of the  
26          Abraham Lincoln Association;

1           (11) one member who is a descendant of a New Salem  
2       resident, appointed by the President of the New Salem  
3       Lincoln League; and

4           (12) one member who is a representative of the  
5       Department of Transportation, appointed by the Secretary  
6       of Transportation.

7       (c) The New Salem Preservation Commission shall convene  
8       and meet at the call of the chairperson and shall meet as  
9       frequently as necessary to carry out its duties as required by  
10      this Act.

11      (d) The Department of Natural Resources shall provide  
12      administrative and other support to the New Salem Preservation  
13      Commission, including assistance with scheduling,  
14      dissemination of information to members, maintaining the  
15      minutes of meetings, and other similar support as required.

16      (e) The members of the New Salem Preservation Commission  
17      shall serve without compensation but shall be reimbursed for  
18      their reasonable and necessary expenses from funds  
19      appropriated for that purpose.

20      (f) The volunteer coordinator at Lincoln's New Salem State  
21      Historic Site shall submit an annual report regarding the  
22      volunteer program and its continuing education programs to the  
23      New Salem Preservation Commission. This report shall be  
24      reviewed and approved by the members of the New Salem  
25      Preservation Commission, and any suggestions will be made to  
26      the Lincoln's New Salem State Historic Site volunteer

1 coordinator and the Division Manager of Historic Preservation  
2 of the Department of Natural Resources for implementation.

3 (g) The New Salem Preservation Commission shall meet once  
4 a year to tour the Site and assess the condition of the  
5 structures and grounds. A report compiled by members of the  
6 New Salem Preservation Commission shall be submitted to the  
7 members of the General Assembly annually regarding the  
8 condition of Lincoln's New Salem State Historic Site,  
9 including any recommended repairs or maintenance revealed to  
10 be deficient during the course of their inspection tour or  
11 reports submitted to the New Salem Preservation Commission by  
12 any other concerned parties.

13 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon  
14 becoming law.