

## **Amendment 3528 – Prohibits the use of federal funds for the construction of a Chinese Garden in Washington, DC**

The United States National Arboretum is a botanical in Washington, D.C., operated by the United States Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service as a division of the Henry A. Wallace Beltsville Agricultural Research Center. It was established in 1927 by an act of Congress. The arboretum conducts wide-ranging basic and developmental research on trees, shrubs, turf, and floral plants. It has a library with 10,000 volumes and approximately 90 publications concentrating in botanical literature. Approximately \$12 million was obligated for the Arboretum in the previous two fiscal years.

Section 7312 of the Senate Farm Bill authorizes construction of a Chinese Garden at the National Arboretum and allows for both private funds and federal taxpayer dollars to complete the project.

This amendment would permit the construction with private donations, but would prohibit federal agricultural assistance—intended to support the gardens of farmers across the country—from being spent to construct the Chinese garden in Washington, D.C.

### **The Chinese Garden is a Gift from the People's Republic of China**

The proposed garden is a result of a 2004 agreement between with U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the People's Republic of China.<sup>1</sup> The garden is a gift of the Chinese people and promises to “be the finest Chinese garden outside of China.”<sup>2</sup> As part of the agreement, the Chinese will provide all of the main structures.

The 8 acre garden will be located at the 446 acre National Arboretum in Northeast Washington, D.C.

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<sup>1</sup> “Classical Chinese Garden Slated for USNA and Nation's Capital,” The U.S. National Arboretum website, December 16, 2004, <http://www.usna.usda.gov/Gardens/collections/ClassicalChineseGarden.html>

<sup>2</sup> “Classical Chinese Garden Slated for USNA and Nation's Capital,” The U.S. National Arboretum website, December 16, 2004, <http://www.usna.usda.gov/Gardens/collections/ClassicalChineseGarden.html>

According to the National Arboretum, the Garden “will never be compromised by surrounding high-rise buildings or other man-made structures.”<sup>3</sup>

The site will include a 1.3 acre lake, a two story tea-house, a Peony Pavilion, a Fragrance Pavilion, a Whispering Pavilion, Chinese goldfish, and a White Pagoda.

According the National Arboretum, “The garden will provide an opportunity for visitors, nationally and internationally, to see and experience a true classical Chinese garden and learn about the culture of China. This will be a setting for people to learn about Chinese culture and its traditional arts and crafts of China. It will be a key location for important meetings and special events for high-ranking officials, the business community, and organizations.”<sup>4</sup>

“Visitors will enjoy walking through the three main components of the Classical Chinese Garden. The first component will be on the right side after the entrance. This enclosed area will include a small pond and traditional Chinese buildings with Ming- and Ching-style hardwood furniture, calligraphy and painting scrolls on the walls. Adjacent to this building will be a traditional boat house located on a 1.3-acre lake.

“The second component will be located further down the path on the left side. This enclosed area of the garden will include a two-story teahouse and an exhibit hall where visitors may taste authentic Chinese tea and enjoy skillful demonstrations of art work including painting and calligraphy. Rockeries representing each of the four seasons will also be included in this component.

“Moving down the path, visitors will enter a traditional long corridor that will take them over the lake and into the third and largest component of the garden. This component houses a series of pavilions designed to highlight the natural beauty and magnificent

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<sup>3</sup> “A Classical Chinese Garden at the US National Arboretum,” The U.S. National Arboretum website, May 22, 2007, [http://www.usna.usda.gov/Gardens/collections/ClassicalChineseGarden\\_USNA.html](http://www.usna.usda.gov/Gardens/collections/ClassicalChineseGarden_USNA.html)

<sup>4</sup> “A Classical Chinese Garden at the US National Arboretum,” The U.S. National Arboretum website, May 22, 2007, [http://www.usna.usda.gov/Gardens/collections/ClassicalChineseGarden\\_USNA.html](http://www.usna.usda.gov/Gardens/collections/ClassicalChineseGarden_USNA.html)

views of the entire garden. Visitors will appreciate the large display of tree peonies at the Peony Pavilion.

“The pathway will be lined with willows as visitors walk to the Fragrance Pavilion, where they can rest and enjoy viewing authentic Chinese goldfish. On their way to an astonishing view of the entire garden in the Whispering Pavilion, visitors will pass a traditional Chinese White Pagoda. From there visitors can follow the path to the Five Pavilions for another extraordinary view of the garden.”<sup>5</sup>

This proposed garden is a thoughtful gift from the Chinese people and may be another attraction for tourists and residents of the Nation’s Capital.

Private fundraising efforts are underway and this amendment will ensure that this gift does not get billed to the American taxpayers or funded at the expense of our Nation’s farmers.

### **A Chinese Garden in Washington, DC, is Not a Priority for America’s Farmers**

The authorization for this project is written into the research title of the Farm Bill.

This means the Chinese Garden will compete with avian influenza, mad cow disease, soybean rust, and other critical agricultural threats for future funding.

As the Farm Bill is reauthorized, Congress has a duty to prioritize the most pressing research needs facing America’s farmers, and a Chinese Garden in Washington, D.C., is clearly not one of these priorities.

This amendment does not halt this project, but simply prevents federal funding intended for America’s farmers and rural

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<sup>5</sup> “A Classical Chinese Garden at the US National Arboretum,” The U.S. National Arboretum website, May 22, 2007, [http://www.usna.usda.gov/Gardens/collections/ClassicalChineseGarden\\_USNA.html](http://www.usna.usda.gov/Gardens/collections/ClassicalChineseGarden_USNA.html)

communities, from being spent to build this garden in the city of Washington, D.C.

### **The Administration Requested Authorization for this Project, But the President Did Not Request Funding for the Chinese Garden**

In a letter to the President of the Senate, the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture requested that Congress pass legislation to “authorize the construction of a classical Chinese Garden on the grounds of the National Arboretum,” but noted that “funds for the Garden are not requested in the President’s FY 2008 Budget.”<sup>6</sup> The letter notes that donated funds could be utilized for the construction.

### **Private Fundraising Efforts to Support the DC Chinese Gardens Are Already Underway**

The People’s Republic of China has agreed to donate all the main structures, rockeries, furniture and art objects for the garden.<sup>7</sup>

A non-profit group calling itself “Friends of China Garden at U. S. National Arboretum” is raising funds for the project.<sup>8</sup>

According to its tax records, “FRIENDS OF CHINA GARDEN WAS FORMED TO SUPPORT AND PROMOTE THE CHINA GARDEN OF THE US NATIONAL ARBORETUM (USNA). THE ORGANIZATION'S MAIN OBJECTIVES ARE: (1) TO PROVIDE ADVICE WHEN NEEDED TO USNA ON MATTERS RELATED TO THE CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES HELD AT THE GARDEN; (2) TO PLAN AND IMPLEMENT CULTURAL EDUCATIONAL AND RESEARCH PROGRAMS APPROPRIATE FOR THE OBJECTIVES OF THE GARDEN, AND (3) TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR USNA'S PROGRAMS RELATED TO THE GARDEN.”

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<sup>6</sup> Correspondence from Honorable Mike Johanns, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, to the Honorable Richard Cheney, President of the U.S. Senate, February 21, 2007.

<sup>7</sup> “Classical Chinese Garden Slated for USNA and Nation's Capital,” The U.S. National Arboretum website, December 16, 2004, <http://www.usna.usda.gov/Gardens/collections/ClassicalChineseGarden.html>

<sup>8</sup> Friends of China Garden at U. S. National Arboretum website, <http://uschinagarden.org/page2.html> , accessed October 31, 2007.

In its latest annual tax filing, Friends of China Garden raised \$95,995 and spent \$3,085 and lists one program accomplishment: "Held three dinner parties to educate attendees regarding the USNA (Arboretum) China Garden and its planned programs."<sup>9</sup>

In addition, funds could be derived from the Friends of the National Arboretum (FONA), which is a non-profit organization founded in 1982 that provides financial support for the U.S. National Arboretum including for the maintenance of the gardens and collections and other special projects. In 2005, FONA reported \$683,825 in revenues and \$1,326,814 in assets.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Friends of China Garden 2005 Tax Form 990,  
<http://www.guidestar.org/FinDocuments/2006/061/754/2006-061754545-02b5eed-9.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Friends of the National Arboretum 2005 Tax Form 990,  
<http://www.guidestar.org/FinDocuments/2005/521/257/2005-521257712-0292dabf-9.pdf>



### *3-D model of China Garden*

This 3-D model of the future classical Chinese garden is now displayed in the Administration Building at National Arboretum.

