

115TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. 756

To reauthorize and amend the Marine Debris Act to promote international action to reduce marine debris, and for other purposes.

---

## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 29, 2017

Mr. SULLIVAN (for himself, Mr. WHITEHOUSE, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. COONS, Mr. PETERS, Mr. INHOFE, Mr. TILLIS, and Ms. MURKOWSKI) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

---

## A BILL

To reauthorize and amend the Marine Debris Act to promote international action to reduce marine debris, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Save Our Seas Act  
5 of 2017” or the “SOS Act of 2017”.

6 **SEC. 2. NOAA MARINE DEBRIS PROGRAM.**

7 Subsection (b) of section 3 of the Marine Debris Act  
8 (33 U.S.C. 1952(b)) is amended—

1           (1) in paragraph (4), by striking “and” at the  
2 end;

3           (2) in paragraph (5)(C), by striking the period  
4 at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

5           (3) by adding at the end the following:

6           “(6) work with other Federal agencies to de-  
7 velop outreach and education strategies to address  
8 both land- and sea-based sources of marine debris;  
9 and

10           “(7) work with the Department of State and  
11 other Federal agencies to promote international ac-  
12 tion to reduce the incidence of marine debris.”.

13 **SEC. 3. ASSISTANCE FOR SEVERE MARINE DEBRIS EVENTS.**

14           Section 3 of the Marine Debris Act (33 U.S.C. 1952)  
15 is amended by adding at the end the following new sub-  
16 section:

17           “(d) ASSISTANCE FOR SEVERE MARINE DEBRIS  
18 EVENTS.—

19           “(1) IN GENERAL.—At the discretion of the Ad-  
20 ministrator or at the request of the Governor of an  
21 affected State, the Administrator shall determine  
22 whether there is a severe marine debris event.

23           “(2) ASSISTANCE.—

24           “(A) IN GENERAL.—If the Administrator  
25 makes a determination under paragraph (1)

1 that there is a severe marine debris event, the  
2 Administrator is authorized to make sums  
3 available to be used by the affected State or by  
4 the Administrator in cooperation with the af-  
5 fected State—

6 “(i) to assist in the cleanup and re-  
7 sponse required by the severe marine de-  
8bris event; or

9 “(ii) such other activity as the Admin-  
10 istrator determines is appropriate in re-  
11 sponse to the severe marine debris event.

12 “(B) PRIORITY ASSISTANCE.—In providing  
13 assistance under this paragraph, the Adminis-  
14 trator shall prioritize assistance for activities to  
15 respond to a severe marine debris event—

16 “(i) in a rural or remote community;

17 or

18 “(ii) in a habitat of national concern.

19 “(3) FUNDING.—

20 “(A) FEDERAL SHARE.—The Federal  
21 share of the cost of an activity carried out  
22 under the authority of this subsection shall  
23 be—

24 “(i) if the activity is funded wholly by  
25 funds made available by an entity, includ-

1           ing the government of a foreign country, to  
 2           the Federal Government for the purpose of  
 3           responding to a severe marine debris event,  
 4           100 percent of the cost of the activity; or

5           “(ii) for any activity other than an ac-  
 6           tivity funded as described in clause (i), 75  
 7           percent of the cost of the activity.

8           “(B) LIMITATION ON ADMINISTRATIVE EX-  
 9           PENSES.—In the case of an activity funded as  
 10          described in subparagraph (A)(i), not more  
 11          than 5 percent of the funds made available for  
 12          the activity may be used by the Administrator  
 13          for administrative expenses.”.

14 **SEC. 4. SENSE OF CONGRESS ON INTERNATIONAL ENGAGE-**  
 15 **MENT TO RESPOND TO MARINE DEBRIS.**

16          It is the sense of Congress that the President  
 17          should—

18               (1) support Federal funding for research and  
 19               development of bio-based and other alternatives or  
 20               environmentally feasible improvements to materials  
 21               that reduce municipal solid waste and its con-  
 22               sequences in the ocean;

23               (2) work with representatives of foreign coun-  
 24               tries that contribute the most to the global marine  
 25               debris problem to learn about, and find solutions to,

1 the contributions of such countries to marine debris  
2 in the world's oceans;

3 (3) carry out studies to determine—

4 (A) the primary means by which solid  
5 waste enters the oceans;

6 (B) the manner in which waste manage-  
7 ment infrastructure can be most effective in  
8 preventing debris from reaching the oceans;

9 (C) the long-term economic impacts of ma-  
10 rine debris on the national economies of each  
11 country set out in paragraph (1) and on the  
12 global economy; and

13 (D) the economic benefits of decreasing the  
14 amount of marine debris in the oceans;

15 (4) work with representatives of foreign coun-  
16 tries that contribute the most to the global marine  
17 debris problem, including land-based sources, to con-  
18 clude one or more new international agreements that  
19 include provisions—

20 (A) to mitigate the risk of land-based ma-  
21 rine debris contributed by such countries reach-  
22 ing an ocean; and

23 (B) to increase technical assistance and in-  
24 vestment in waste management infrastructure,  
25 if the President determines appropriate; and

1           (5) encourage the United States Trade Rep-  
2           representative to consider the impact of marine debris  
3           in relevant future trade agreements.

4 **SEC. 5. MEMBERSHIP OF THE INTERAGENCY MARINE DE-**  
5 **BRIS COORDINATING COMMITTEE.**

6           Section 5(b) of the Marine Debris Act (33 U.S.C.  
7 1954(b)) is amended—

8           (1) in paragraph (4), by striking “; and” and  
9           inserting a semicolon;

10          (2) by redesignating paragraph (5) as para-  
11          graph (7); and

12          (3) by inserting after paragraph (4) the fol-  
13          lowing:

14                 “(5) the Department of State;

15                 “(6) the Department of the Interior; and”.

16 **SEC. 6. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

17          Section 9 of the Marine Debris Act (33 U.S.C. 1958)  
18 is amended to read as follows:

19 **“SEC. 9. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

20          “There are authorized to be appropriated for each fis-  
21 cal year 2018 through 2022—

22                 “(1) to the Administrator for carrying out sec-  
23                 tions 3, 5, and 6, \$10,000,000, of which no more  
24                 than 10 percent may be for administrative costs;  
25                 and

1           “(2) to the Secretary of the Department in  
2           which the Coast Guard is operating, for the use of  
3           the Commandant of the Coast Guard in carrying out  
4           section 4, \$2,000,000, of which no more than 10  
5           percent may be used for administrative costs.”.

○