

116TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. 3131

To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to establish a Maya Security and Conservation Partnership program, to authorize appropriations for that program, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

DECEMBER 19, 2019

Mr. INHOFE (for himself, Mr. UDALL, and Mr. RISCH) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

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## A BILL

To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to establish a Maya Security and Conservation Partnership program, to authorize appropriations for that program, 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 “Mirador-Calakmul  
5 Basin Maya Security and Conservation Partnership Act  
6 of 2019”.

7 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

8 Congress finds that—

1           (1) the Mirador-Calakmul Basin (referred to in  
2 this Act as the “Basin”) is recognized scientifically  
3 as, and has been termed, “the Cradle of Maya Civili-  
4 zation”, with over 100 ancient Maya cities dating  
5 back almost 3,000 years, and includes the world’s  
6 largest pyramids in volume, the tallest pyramids in  
7 the Americas, the first paved ancient highway sys-  
8 tems, the earliest and largest ancient Maya cities,  
9 and the home of the ancient Ka’an (Kan) Kingdom,  
10 which is recognized as one of the first organized po-  
11 litical and economic states in the Americas;

12           (2) the Basin covers approximately 1,600,000  
13 acres of pristine tropical forest within a geographi-  
14 cally contained ecological system;

15           (3) the forest referred to in paragraph (2) is a  
16 crucial economic resource for the people of Central  
17 America and Mexico living in villages surrounding  
18 the Basin;

19           (4) the Basin is a reservoir of genetic diversity  
20 that can spark potential advances in medical, agri-  
21 cultural, and industrial technology; and

22           (5) the Basin is centrally located within the  
23 larger Selva Maya, a large block of adjacent pro-  
24 tected areas within Guatemala, Mexico, and Belize,  
25 within which increased crossboundary trafficking of

1 timber, gold, wildlife, and other resources is taking  
2 place with little central government control or law  
3 enforcement.

4 **SEC. 3. STATEMENT OF POLICY.**

5 It is the policy of the United States—

6 (1) that the United States encourages the gov-  
7 ernments of Mexico and Guatemala—

8 (A) to prioritize the Basin; and

9 (B) to establish a formal joint program for  
10 the security and conservation of the biodiversity  
11 and archeological ruins of the Basin, com-  
12 prising “the Cradle of Maya Civilization”,  
13 which would be the first ever binational security  
14 and conservation program of its size and scale  
15 in Latin America;

16 (2) to fund field-based tropical and archeo-  
17 logical research, law enforcement, and sustainable  
18 tourism activities within the Basin and surrounding  
19 communities to support and strengthen protected  
20 areas while enlisting local communities in those ac-  
21 tivities; and

22 (3) that the implementation of and funding for  
23 the policy described in paragraph (2) should empha-  
24 size that—

1 (A) United States investment under this  
2 Act shall be in addition to existing United  
3 States efforts;

4 (B) the governments of Guatemala and  
5 Mexico, multilateral organizations such as the  
6 Central American Bank for Economic Integra-  
7 tion, local communities, and private sector orga-  
8 nizations should have a leading role in fostering  
9 the partnership to preserve and protect the  
10 Basin; and

11 (C) United States funding should leverage  
12 investments by the governments of Guatemala  
13 and Mexico and regional research organizations.

14 **SEC. 4. PRIORITY FOR INVESTMENTS IN THE BASIN.**

15 The Secretary of the Interior shall prioritize contin-  
16 ued tropical forest and archeological scientific research,  
17 law enforcement, and sustainable tourism in the scientif-  
18 ically recognized Basin in northern Guatemala and south-  
19 ern Mexico by establishing a collaborative heritage con-  
20 servation program and sustainable tourism model in col-  
21 laboration with—

22 (1) the governments of Guatemala and Mexico;  
23 and

24 (2) the ongoing scientific research team of  
25 United States and international universities and in-

1       stitutions performing tropical and archaeological  
2       work in the Basin.

3       **SEC. 5. GRANT PROGRAM.**

4       (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Interior, act-  
5       ing through the Office of International Affairs of the De-  
6       partment of the Interior (referred to in this section as the  
7       “Secretary”), as a contribution to the scientific investiga-  
8       tion, heritage conservation, law enforcement, and sustain-  
9       able tourism of the scientifically recognized Basin in Gua-  
10      temala and Mexico, shall—

11               (1) establish a Maya Security and Conservation  
12      Partnership program; and

13               (2) carry out a program to enter into coopera-  
14      tive agreements or provide grants, as appropriate, to  
15      support the Maya Security and Conservation Part-  
16      nership program.

17      (b) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS AND GRANTS.—A  
18      cooperative agreement or grant under subsection (a)(2)  
19      shall, in part, support demonstrably effective, ongoing,  
20      and collaborative research efforts involving a consortium  
21      of United States and local universities and research insti-  
22      tutions working in the Basin.

23      (c) GOAL.—The goal of the program established  
24      under subsection (a)(1) shall be to create a sustainable  
25      tourism model designed to provide low impact, controlled

1 access to the archaeological sites of the Basin with an em-  
2 phasis on providing safe and secure economic opportunity  
3 for the local communities in and around the Basin.

4 (d) LIMITATION ON USE OF FUNDS.—Of the funds  
5 made available to carry out this section for a fiscal year,  
6 50 percent may not be used until, as determined by the  
7 Secretary of State, in consultation with the Secretary, the  
8 governments of Guatemala and Mexico have provided sig-  
9 nificant direct investment to effectively counter illegal ac-  
10 tivities within the region that encompasses the Basin, in-  
11 cluding illegal logging and looting of archeological sites  
12 along the Guatemala-Mexico border and within the Basin.

13 (e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is  
14 authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary to carry  
15 out this section \$12,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2021  
16 through 2026, to remain available until expended.

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