

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 10007

To prioritize educating and training for existing and new environmental health professionals.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 30, 2026

Mr. THANEDAR introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Education and Workforce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To prioritize educating and training for existing and new environmental health professionals.

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 “Environmental Health
5 Workforce Act of 2026”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) The environmental health workforce is vital
9 to protecting the health and safety of the public.

1 (2) For years, State and local governmental
2 public health agencies have reported substantial
3 workforce losses and other challenges to the environ-
4 mental health workforce.

5 (3) According to the Association of State and
6 Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) and the Na-
7 tional Association of County and City Health Offi-
8 cials (NACCHO), more than 50,600 State and local
9 environmental health workforce jobs have been lost
10 since 2008. This represents approximately 22 per-
11 cent of the total State and local environmental
12 health workforce.

13 (4) In the coming years, the retiring Baby
14 Boomer Generation will lead to a further decrease in
15 the environmental health workforce.

16 (5) According to the National Environmental
17 Health Association, more than 67 percent of Tribal
18 environmental health programs, 64 percent of State
19 environmental health programs, and 60 percent of
20 local environmental health programs report insuffi-
21 cient staffing capacity to respond to new issues pre-
22 sented by the COVID–19 pandemic. Industry work-
23 ers also reported insufficient access to training and
24 high levels of burnout.

1 (6) Currently, only 27 States require a creden-
2 tial for environmental health workers that is an im-
3 partial, third-party endorsement of an individual's
4 professional knowledge and experience.

5 (7) Educating and training existing and new
6 environmental health professionals should be a na-
7 tional public health goal.

8 **SEC. 3. MODEL STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR**
9 **CREDENTIALING ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH**
10 **WORKERS.**

11 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the
12 date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Health and
13 Human Services, in coordination with appropriate na-
14 tional professional organizations, Federal, State, local,
15 and tribal governmental agencies, and private-sector and
16 nongovernmental entities, shall develop model standards
17 and guidelines for credentialing environmental health
18 workers.

19 (b) PROVISION OF STANDARDS AND TECHNICAL AS-
20 SISTANCE.—The Secretary of Health and Human Services
21 shall provide to State, local, and tribal governments—

22 (1) the model standards and guidelines devel-
23 oped under subsection (a); and

24 (2) technical assistance in credentialing envi-
25 ronmental health workers.

1 **SEC. 4. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH WORKFORCE DEVELOP-**
2 **MENT PLAN.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—To ensure that programs and ac-
4 tivities (including education, training, and payment pro-
5 grams) of the Department of Health and Human Services
6 for developing the environmental health workforce meet
7 national needs, the Secretary of Health and Human Serv-
8 ices shall develop a comprehensive and coordinated plan
9 for such programs and activities that—

10 (1) includes performance measures to more
11 clearly determine the extent to which these programs
12 and activities are meeting the Department’s stra-
13 tegic goal of strengthening the environmental health
14 workforce;

15 (2) identifies and communicates to stakeholders
16 any gaps between existing programs and activities
17 and future environmental health workforce needs
18 identified in workforce projections of the Health Re-
19 sources and Services Administration;

20 (3) identifies actions needed to address such
21 identified gaps; and

22 (4) identifies any additional statutory authority
23 that is needed by the Department to implement such
24 identified actions.

25 (b) SUBMISSION TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 2
26 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Sec-

1 retary of Health and Human Services shall submit to the
2 Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of
3 the Senate, and to the Committees on Energy and Com-
4 merce and Education and Labor of the House of Rep-
5 resentatives, the plan developed under subsection (a).

6 **SEC. 5. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH WORKFORCE DEVELOP-**
7 **MENT REPORT.**

8 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years after the
9 date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General
10 of the United States shall examine and identify best prac-
11 tices in 6 States (as described in subsection (b)) related
12 to training and credentialing requirements for environ-
13 mental health workers and submit to the Committee on
14 Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate and
15 the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House
16 of Representatives a report that includes information con-
17 cerning—

18 (1) types of environmental health workers em-
19 ployed at State, local, and city health departments
20 and independent environmental health agencies;

21 (2) educational backgrounds of environmental
22 health workers;

23 (3) whether environmental health workers are
24 credentialed or registered, and what type of creden-
25 tial or registration each worker has received;

1 (4) State requirements for continuing education
2 for environmental health workers;

3 (5) whether State, local, and city health depart-
4 ments and independent environmental health agen-
5 cies track continuing education units for their envi-
6 ronmental health workers; and

7 (6) how frequently any exam required to qualify
8 environmental health workers is updated and re-
9 viewed to ensure that the exam is consistent with
10 current law.

11 (b) SELECTION OF STATES.—The report described in
12 subsection (a) shall be based upon the examination of such
13 best practices with respect to 3 States that have
14 credentialing requirements for environmental health work-
15 ers (such as Maryland, Ohio, and Washington) and 3
16 States that do not have such requirements (such as Indi-
17 ana, Iowa, and Pennsylvania).

18 **SEC. 6. PUBLIC SERVICE LOAN FORGIVENESS.**

19 Section 455(m) of the Higher Education Act of 1965
20 (20 U.S.C. 1087e(m)) is amended in paragraph (3)(B)—

21 (1) in clause (i), by striking “or” at the end;

22 (2) in clause (ii), by striking the period at the
23 end and inserting “; or”; and

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

1 “(iii) a full-time job as an environ-
2 mental health worker (as defined in section
3 7 of the Environmental Health Workforce
4 Act of 2026) who is accredited, certified,
5 or licensed in accordance with applicable
6 law.”.

7 **SEC. 7. DEFINITION.**

8 In this Act, the terms “environmental health worker”
9 and “environmental health workforce” refer to public
10 health workers who investigate and assess hazardous envi-
11 ronmental agents in various environmental settings and
12 develop, promote, and enforce guidelines, policies, and
13 interventions to control such hazards.

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