

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 2873

To amend the National Marine Sanctuaries Act to prohibit requiring an authorization for the installation, continued presence, operation, maintenance, repair, or recovery of undersea fiber optic cables in a national marine sanctuary if such activities have previously been authorized by a Federal or State agency.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 18 (legislative day, SEPTEMBER 16), 2025

Mrs. BLACKBURN introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

A BILL

To amend the National Marine Sanctuaries Act to prohibit requiring an authorization for the installation, continued presence, operation, maintenance, repair, or recovery of undersea fiber optic cables in a national marine sanctuary if such activities have previously been authorized by a Federal or State agency.

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 “Undersea Cable Pro-
5 tection Act of 2025”.

1 **SEC. 2. PROHIBITION ON REQUIRING AUTHORIZATIONS**
2 **FOR UNDERSEA FIBER OPTIC CABLES PRE-**
3 **VIOUSLY AUTHORIZED BY FEDERAL OR**
4 **STATE AGENCIES.**

5 The National Marine Sanctuaries Act (16 U.S.C.
6 1431 et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 310
7 (16 U.S.C. 1441) the following:

8 **“SEC. 310A. PROHIBITION ON REQUIRING AUTHORIZA-**
9 **TIONS FOR UNDERSEA FIBER OPTIC CABLES**
10 **PREVIOUSLY AUTHORIZED BY FEDERAL OR**
11 **STATE AGENCIES.**

12 “(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other pro-
13 vision of this Act, the Secretary may not prohibit or re-
14 quire any authorization for the installation, continued
15 presence, operation, maintenance, repair, or recovery of
16 undersea fiber optic cables in a national marine sanctuary
17 if a license, lease, or permit has been issued by a Federal
18 or State agency authorizing such installation, continued
19 presence, operation, maintenance, repair, or recovery.

20 “(b) INTERAGENCY COOPERATION.—The Secretary
21 may direct the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Admin-
22 istration to engage in interagency cooperation under sec-
23 tion 304(d) in any Federal agency action described in that
24 section and involving the installation, continued presence,

- 1 operation, maintenance, repair, or recovery of undersea
- 2 fiber optic cables in a national marine sanctuary.”.

