

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 3695

To amend Public Law 96–586 to modernize the authority of the Forest Service to acquire and administer land under that Act, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 27, 2026

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO (for herself, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. PADILLA, and Mr. SCHIFF)
introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

A BILL

To amend Public Law 96–586 to modernize the authority
of the Forest Service to acquire and administer land
under that Act, 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 “Santini-Burton Mod-
5 ernization Act of 2026”.

1 **SEC. 2. ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE LAND IN THE LAKE**
 2 **TAHOE BASIN.**

3 (a) FINDINGS; PURPOSE.—Section 1 of Public Law
 4 96–586 (94 Stat. 3381) (commonly known as the
 5 “Santini-Burton Act”) is amended—

6 (1) in subsection (a)—

7 (A) in paragraph (6), by striking “and” at
 8 the end;

9 (B) in paragraph (7), by striking the pe-
 10 riod at the end and inserting “; and”; and

11 (C) by adding at the end the following:

12 “(8) the Lake Tahoe Basin is the homeland of
 13 the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California, but
 14 that Tribe owns less than 0.5 percent of the land in
 15 the Lake Tahoe Basin, and that limited land owner-
 16 ship and the presence of that land in the Lake
 17 Tahoe Basin hamper the ability of the Washoe Tribe
 18 of Nevada and California to provide access and cul-
 19 tural resources for the members of that Tribe.”; and

20 (2) in subsection (b), by inserting “and man-
 21 agement” after “acquisition”.

22 (b) ACQUISITIONS; LAND MANAGEMENT.—Section 3
 23 of Public Law 96–586 (94 Stat. 3383; 114 Stat. 2357;
 24 130 Stat. 1790) (commonly known as the “Santini-Burton
 25 Act”) is amended—

1 (1) in subsection (a)(3), in the first sentence,
 2 by inserting “the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and Cali-
 3 fornia, and” after “local government agencies,”;

4 (2) in subsection (b)—

5 (A) in paragraph (1)—

6 (i) by striking “Land” and inserting
 7 the following:

8 “(A) NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM.—Except
 9 as provided in subparagraph (B), land”;

10 (ii) in subparagraph (A) (as so des-
 11 ignated), by striking “United States Na-
 12 tional Forest System; except that the Sec-
 13 retary” and inserting the following: “Na-
 14 tional Forest System.

15 “(B) TRANSFERS.—

16 “(i) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary”;
 17 and

18 (iii) in subparagraph (B) (as so des-
 19 ignated)—

20 (I) in clause (i)—

21 (aa) by striking “lands”
 22 each place it appears and insert-
 23 ing “land”;

24 (bb) by striking “which are
 25 unsuitable” and inserting “ac-

1 quired under this section that is
2 unsuitable”; and

3 (cc) by inserting “or to the
4 Washoe Tribe of Nevada and
5 California” after “local govern-
6 ment”; and

7 (II) by adding at the end the fol-
8 lowing:

9 “(ii) FUNDING.—Amounts made
10 available to carry out this section may be
11 used for the administrative costs of trans-
12 fers of land and interests in land under
13 this subsection.”; and

14 (B) by adding at the end the following:

15 “(7) LAND MANAGEMENT.—

16 “(A) ACQUIRED LAND.—Notwithstanding
17 any other provision of law, funds appropriated
18 pursuant to this Act for the purpose of the ac-
19 quisition of land and interests in land under
20 this section may be used by the Secretary of
21 Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the
22 Forest Service, for—

23 “(i) land management activities on
24 land acquired under this section within the
25 Lake Tahoe Basin; and

1 “(ii) land management activities on
2 National Forest System land within the
3 boundaries of the Lake Tahoe Basin Man-
4 agement Unit.

5 “(B) TRANSFERRED LAND.—Notwith-
6 standing any other provision of law, the Sec-
7 retary of Agriculture may transfer funds made
8 available pursuant to this Act for the purpose
9 of the acquisition of land and interests in land
10 under this section to appropriate units of State
11 or local government or to the Washoe Tribe of
12 Nevada and California to carry out land man-
13 agement activities on land acquired under this
14 section and transferred to that unit of State or
15 local government or to that Tribe.

16 “(C) INCLUDED LAND MANAGEMENT AC-
17 TIVITIES.—Land management activities that
18 may be carried out under subparagraphs (A)
19 and (B) shall include activities for the purposes
20 of—

21 “(i) maintaining forest health;

22 “(ii) maintaining the wildland-urban
23 interface (as defined in section 101 of the
24 Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003
25 (16 U.S.C. 6511));

1 “(iii) maintaining water quality;

2 “(iv) preventing and mitigating envi-
3 ronmental impacts due to recreational use;

4 “(v) preserving cultural sites and in-
5 digenous management practices; and

6 “(vi) scientific research to support de-
7 cisions relating to land management activi-
8 ties described in clauses (i) through (v).

9 “(D) PARTNERSHIPS.—

10 “(i) FEDERAL AGENCIES.—The Sec-
11 retary of Agriculture, acting through the
12 Chief of the Forest Service, may enter into
13 partnerships with the heads of applicable
14 Federal agencies to carry out land man-
15 agement activities under subparagraph
16 (A).

17 “(ii) OTHER PARTNERSHIPS.—Not-
18 withstanding any other provision of law,
19 the Secretary of Agriculture, acting
20 through the Chief of the Forest Service,
21 may enter into partnerships with, and
22 transfer funds appropriated pursuant to
23 this Act for the purpose of the acquisition
24 of land and interests in land under this
25 section to, appropriate units of State or

1 local government, the Tahoe Regional
2 Planning Agency, or the Washoe Tribe of
3 Nevada and California to develop and im-
4 plement the land management activities
5 described in subparagraph (C) and projects
6 to provide public access to—

7 “(I) land in the Lake Tahoe
8 Basin acquired under this section;

9 “(II) land with a nexus to Fed-
10 eral land in the Lake Tahoe Basin or
11 the shoreline of Lake Tahoe; or

12 “(III) land in the Lake Tahoe
13 Basin that is of cultural significance
14 to the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and
15 California.

16 “(E) SPENDING PLAN.—

17 “(i) IN GENERAL.—Not later than
18 March 15 of each fiscal year, the Secretary
19 of Agriculture, acting through the Forest
20 Supervisor of the Lake Tahoe Basin Man-
21 agement Unit, shall develop a spending
22 plan for activities under this paragraph for
23 the next fiscal year consistent with the pri-
24 orities of the Lake Tahoe Environmental
25 Improvement Program.

1 “(ii) CONSULTATION.—In developing
 2 the spending plan under clause (i), the
 3 Secretary of Agriculture, acting through
 4 the Forest Supervisor of the Lake Tahoe
 5 Basin Management Unit, shall consult
 6 with—

7 “(I) the Tahoe Regional Plan-
 8 ning Agency;

9 “(II) the States of California and
 10 Nevada;

11 “(III) the Washoe Tribe of Ne-
 12 vada and California; and

13 “(IV) appropriate units of local
 14 government.

15 “(iii) CRITERIA.—The ranking of
 16 management activities in the spending plan
 17 developed under clause (i) shall be based
 18 on—

19 “(I) the potential to significantly
 20 contribute to the achievement and
 21 maintenance of the environmental
 22 threshold carrying capacities adopted
 23 by the Tahoe Regional Planning
 24 Agency and the Tahoe Regional Plan-

1 ning Compact (Public Law 96–551;
2 94 Stat. 3233);

3 “(II) the 4-year threshold car-
4 rying capacity evaluation;

5 “(III) the ability to measure
6 progress or success of the manage-
7 ment activity;

8 “(IV) the ability of the manage-
9 ment activity to have multiple bene-
10 fits;

11 “(V) the ability of the manage-
12 ment activity to leverage other con-
13 tributions;

14 “(VI) inclusion on the 5-year pri-
15 ority list for the Lake Tahoe Environ-
16 mental Improvement Program; and

17 “(VII) whether there is stake-
18 holder support for the management
19 activity.

20 “(iv) FUNDING FOR ADMINISTRATION;
21 AVAILABILITY.—Any funds made available
22 under this paragraph and allocated under
23 the spending plan developed under clause
24 (i)—

1 “(I) may be used for administra-
2 tive costs of carrying out the spending
3 plan; and

4 “(II) shall remain available until
5 expended.

6 “(F) MAINTENANCE OF FUNDING.—Not-
7 withstanding any other provision of law, any
8 funds made available under this paragraph shall
9 supplement, and not supplant, any other
10 amounts available to the Secretary of Agri-
11 culture for expenditure in the Lake Tahoe
12 Basin and any other amounts made available by
13 Congress.

14 “(G) CONSIDERATION AS NON-FEDERAL
15 MATCHING FUNDS.—Notwithstanding any other
16 provision of law, any funds transferred under
17 this paragraph to the Washoe Tribe of Nevada
18 and California, an appropriate unit of State or
19 local government, or the Tahoe Regional Plan-
20 ning Agency shall be considered to be non-Fed-
21 eral matching funds for purposes of any other
22 provision of Federal law.”;

23 (3) in subsection (c)(4)—

24 (A) in subparagraph (A), by striking
25 “and” at the end;

1 (B) by redesignating subparagraph (B) as
2 subparagraph (C); and

3 (C) by inserting after subparagraph (A)
4 the following:

5 “(B) ‘Lake Tahoe Basin Management
6 Unit’ means the land area included in the man-
7 agement unit created by the Forest Service in
8 1973; and”;

9 (4) by redesignating subsection (g) as sub-
10 section (h); and

11 (5) by inserting after subsection (f) the fol-
12 lowing:

13 “(g) ACQUISITION AND MANAGEMENT OF LAND OF
14 CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE TO THE WASHOE TRIBE OF
15 NEVADA AND CALIFORNIA.—Notwithstanding any other
16 provision of law, the Secretary of Agriculture, acting
17 through the Chief of the Forest Service, may transfer
18 funds appropriated pursuant to this Act for the purpose
19 of the acquisition of land and interests in land under this
20 section to the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California to
21 acquire and manage land of cultural significance to that
22 Tribe in the Lake Tahoe Basin for the purposes of preser-
23 vation, access, and land management.”.

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