

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 4548

To amend the Food Security Act of 1985 to establish a program to promote upland species habitat restoration, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 14, 2026

Mr. JUSTICE introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

A BILL

To amend the Food Security Act of 1985 to establish a program to promote upland species habitat restoration, 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 “Growing and Restoring
5 Operational Upland Species Ecosystems Act of 2026” or
6 the “GROUSE Act of 2026”.

1 **SEC. 2. UPLAND SPECIES HABITAT RESTORATION PRO-**
 2 **GRAM.**

3 Chapter 5 of subtitle D of title XII of the Food Secu-
 4 rity Act of 1985 is amended by inserting after section
 5 1240M (16 U.S.C. 3839bb) the following:

6 **“SEC. 1240N. UPLAND SPECIES HABITAT RESTORATION**
 7 **PROGRAM.**

8 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish a
 9 program to provide payments to landowners that enter
 10 into contracts with the Secretary under this section for
 11 restoration of eligible forest land.

12 “(b) ELIGIBLE FOREST LAND.—

13 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Forest land for which a
 14 landowner is eligible to receive a payment under this
 15 section is an area of not less than 10 acres of non-
 16 industrial private forest land that—

17 “(A) was commercially logged within the
 18 previous 180-day period;

19 “(B) is currently being commercially
 20 logged, but has not been cut and cleared into
 21 open land for the purpose of development;

22 “(C) is currently being commercially
 23 logged and will be cut and cleared for the pur-
 24 pose of forest management; or

25 “(D) was affected by a major natural dis-
 26 aster, as determined by the Secretary, such as

1 a tornado, hurricane, wildfire, or insect infesta-
2 tion.

3 “(2) LIMITATION.—Of the eligible forest land
4 described in paragraph (1) owned by a landowner,
5 the landowner shall not receive payments under this
6 section for more than the lesser of—

7 “(A) 5 percent; and

8 “(B) 250 acres.

9 “(c) PAYMENTS.—

10 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall provide
11 payments to a landowner that enters into a contract
12 with the Secretary under this section for 75 percent
13 of the costs of habitat restoration activities incurred
14 by the landowner in establishing native vegetation
15 beneficial to upland wildlife, including planting na-
16 tive, soft-mast tree and shrub species and other na-
17 tive vegetation commonly found in early successional
18 habitats, on eligible forest land, including costs of—

19 “(A) labor;

20 “(B) planting;

21 “(C) fertilizer;

22 “(D) seedlings; and

23 “(E) other materials and practices, as de-
24 termined by the Secretary.

1 “(2) DETERMINATION OF AMOUNTS.—The Sec-
 2 retary shall establish the amounts of eligible costs
 3 under paragraph (1).

4 “(d) CONTRACTS.—

5 “(1) APPLICATIONS.—To be eligible to enter
 6 into a contract under this section, a landowner shall
 7 submit to the Secretary an application at such time,
 8 in such manner, and containing such information as
 9 the Secretary may require.

10 “(2) TERM.—A contract under this section
 11 shall have a term that does not exceed 5 years.

12 “(3) HABITAT PLAN.—A contract under this
 13 section shall include a habitat plan developed by the
 14 applicable landowner, in consultation with private,
 15 nongovernmental, State, or Federal wildlife biolo-
 16 gists or foresters.

17 “(e) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary may
 18 provide to a landowner that enters into a contract under
 19 this section (including through a third-party provider pur-
 20 suant to section 1242) technical assistance in the planting
 21 of trees and shrubs in accordance with the contract.”.

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