

SINKHOLE MAPPING ACT OF 2025

JULY 2, 2025.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. WESTERMAN, from the Committee on Natural Resources,
submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany H.R. 900]

The Committee on Natural Resources, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 900) to direct the Director of the United States Geological Survey to establish a program to map zones that are at greater risk of sinkhole formation, and for other purposes, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon with an amendment and recommends that the bill as amended do pass.

The amendment is as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Sinkhole Mapping Act of 2025”.

SEC. 2. SINKHOLE HAZARD IDENTIFICATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the availability of appropriations made in advance for such purpose, the Director of the United States Geological Survey shall establish a program to—

- (1) study the short-term and long-term mechanisms that cause sinkholes, including extreme storm events, prolonged droughts causing shifts in water management practices, aquifer depletion, and other major changes in water use; and
- (2) develop maps that depict zones that are at greater risk of sinkhole formation.

(b) USE OF CERTAIN DATA.—In developing maps under subsection (a)(2), the Director of the United States Geological Survey shall utilize 3D elevation data (as that term is defined in section 2 of the National Landslide Preparedness Act (43 U.S.C. 3101)) collected pursuant to section 5 of that Act (43 U.S.C. 3104).

(c) REVIEW OF MAPS.—Once during each 5-year period, or more often as the Director of the United States Geological Survey determines is necessary, the Director shall assess the need to revise and update the maps developed under this section.

(d) WEBSITE.—The Director of the United States Geological Survey shall establish and maintain a public website that displays the maps developed under this section and other relevant information critical for use by community planners and emergency managers.

PURPOSE OF THE LEGISLATION

The purpose of H.R. 900 is to direct the Director of the United States Geological Survey to establish a program to map zones that are at greater risk of sinkhole formation, and for other purposes.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

H.R. 900 directs the United States Geological Survey (USGS) to examine the short- and long-term causes of sinkholes and map areas at greater risk of sinkhole formation. Sinkholes are a dangerous natural hazard, created when a ground depression lacks external surface drainage and the rock below the subsurface is dissolved by groundwater.¹ While rock in the subsurface gradually dissolves creating an underground cavern, the surface can stay intact for a time, until the underground cavern gets to be too large and cannot support the surface leading to a collapse.² Over the past 15 years, damage from sinkholes cost an average of \$300 million annually in the United States.³

H.R. 900 directs USGS to establish a program to study the causes of sinkholes, including storms and droughts. The development of such program would be subject to the availability of appropriations. The bill also requires USGS to develop, and make publicly available, maps of higher-risk areas and revise them as needed every five years. These provisions could reduce the risk to the public and help land-use planners make development decisions. H.R. 900 has bipartisan cosponsors, including two Republicans: Reps. Gus Bilirakis (R-FL) and Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA). Previous versions of this bill passed the Committee on Natural Resources by unanimous consent in the 116th, 117th, and 118th Congresses.

COMMITTEE ACTION

H.R. 900 was introduced on January 31, 2025, by Representative Darren Soto (D-FL). The bill was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources. On April 9, 2025, the Committee on Natural Resources met to consider the bill. Representative Darren Soto (D-FL) offered an Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute designated Soto_012 ANS. The Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute was adopted by unanimous consent. The bill, as amended, was then ordered favorably reported to the House of Representatives by unanimous consent.

HEARINGS

For the purposes of clause 3(c)(6) of House rule XIII, the following hearing was used to develop or consider this measure: hearing in the 118th Congress by the Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources held on October 25, 2023.

¹U.S. Geological Survey, Geology, What is a Sinkhole, <https://www.usgs.gov/faqs/what-a-sinkhole>.

²*Id.*

³U.S. Geological Survey, Geology, Frequently Asked Questions, <https://www.usgs.gov/faqs/how-much-does-sinkhole-damage-cost-each-year-united-states>.

SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

Section 1. Short title

Section 1 designates the short title of this bill as the “Sinkhole Mapping Act of 2025”.

Section 2. Sinkhole hazard identification

Section 2 requires the Director of the USGS to establish a program to study short- and long-term causes of sinkholes, such as heavy rainfall and prolonged droughts. The USGS must also develop maps that analyze zones that are at risk of sinkhole formation. When developing these maps, the USGS will use Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) data acquired through the 3D Elevation Program, and these maps must be updated at least every 5 years, or more frequently if the Director determines it is necessary, and must be made publicly available. No appropriations are authorized for this program in this bill.

COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Regarding clause 2(b)(1) of rule X and clause 3(c)(1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee on Natural Resources’ oversight findings and recommendations are reflected in the body of this report.

COMPLIANCE WITH HOUSE RULE XIII AND
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET ACT

1. *Cost of Legislation and the Congressional Budget Act.* Pursuant to clause 3(c)(2) of House rule XIII and section 308(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, and pursuant to clause 3(c)(3) of House rule XIII and section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the Committee has requested but not received from the Director of the Congressional Budget Office a budgetary analysis and a cost estimate of this bill.

2. *General Performance Goals and Objectives.* As required by clause 3(c)(4) of rule XIII, the general performance goal or objective of this bill is to direct the Director of the United States Geological Survey to establish a program to map zones that are at greater risk of sinkhole formation, and for other purposes.

EARMARK STATEMENT

This bill does not contain any Congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined under clause 9(e), 9(f), and 9(g) of rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives.

UNFUNDED MANDATES REFORM ACT STATEMENT

An estimate of federal mandates prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office pursuant to section 423 of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act was not made available to the Committee in time for the filing of this report. The Chair of the Committee shall cause such estimate to be printed in the Congressional Record upon its receipt by the Committee, if such estimate is not publicly available on the Congressional Budget Office website.

EXISTING PROGRAMS

Directed Rule Making. This bill does not contain any directed rule makings.

Duplication of Existing Programs. This bill does not establish or reauthorize a program of the federal government known to be duplicative of another program. Such program was not included in any report from the Government Accountability Office to Congress pursuant to section 21 of Public Law 111–139 or identified in the most recent Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance published pursuant to the Federal Program Information Act (Public Law 95–220, as amended by Public Law 98–169) as relating to other programs.

APPLICABILITY TO LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

The Committee finds that the legislation does not relate to the terms and conditions of employment or access to public services or accommodations within the meaning of section 102(b)(3) of the Congressional Accountability Act.

PREEMPTION OF STATE, LOCAL OR TRIBAL LAW

Any preemptive effect of this bill over state, local, or tribal law is intended to be consistent with the bill's purposes and text and the Supremacy Clause of Article VI of the U.S. Constitution.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

As ordered reported by the Committee on Natural Resources, H.R. 900 would make no changes in existing law.

