

Calendar No. 351

119TH CONGRESS }
2d Session }

SENATE

{ REPORT
119-115 }

YOUNG FISHERMEN'S DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAM REAUTHORIZATION ACT

R E P O R T

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND
TRANSPORTATION

ON

S. 2357



MARCH 11, 2026.—Ordered to be printed

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SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

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Mr. CRUZ, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and
Transportation, submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany S. 2357]

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, to which was referred the bill (S. 2357) to reauthorize the Young Fishermen's Development Act, and for other purposes, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon with an amendment in the nature of a substitute and recommends that the bill, as amended, do pass.

PURPOSE OF THE BILL

The purpose of S. 2357 is to reauthorize the Young Fishermen's Development Act,¹ which established a grant program to support local and regional training and education for young fishermen. The bill further refines the program by adding parameters to ensure that grant funds advance the program's core objective of developing the next generation of commercial fishermen.

BACKGROUND AND NEEDS

The United States is among the leading fishing nations in the world, with commercial and recreational fisheries generating \$321 billion in sales and supporting nearly 2.3 million jobs in 2022.² Yet

¹Public Law 116–289.

²National Marine Fisheries Service, *Fisheries Economics of the United States, 2022*, Department of Commerce, NOAA technical memorandum NMFS–F/SPO–248B, November 2024, <https://s3.amazonaws.com/media.fisheries.noaa.gov/2024-11/FEUS-2022-SPO248B.pdf>.

beneath this economic strength lies a demographic challenge: the fishing workforce is aging rapidly.³ For example, the average age of a commercial fisherman in Alaska has increased by 10 years over the past generation.⁴

Barriers to entry, including high startup costs for vessels, permits, gear, and constantly evolving technology as well as variable harvests vulnerable to fluctuating environmental conditions, are shaping who can access and succeed in fisheries.⁵ Throughout the country, rural outmigration is linked to fewer people entering the fishing workforce and is contributing to the erosion of both working waterfronts and community-based fishing knowledge.⁶ Without targeted efforts to lower entry barriers, the U.S. fishing industry risks losing not just younger participants, but also long-term economic vitality and cultural continuity.⁷

Prior to the enactment of the Young Fishermen’s Development Act in 2021,⁸ there was no Federal program dedicated to training and educating the next generation of commercial fishermen, who face high entry costs, capital requirements, and the erosion of intergenerational knowledge transfer.⁹ Since its passage, the program has provided nearly \$2 million in funding for training and mentorship programs,¹⁰ including initiatives such as “Skills and Drills” workshops that prepare new entrants with the skills needed for commercial fishing jobs.¹¹

SUMMARY OF PROVISIONS

S. 2357 would do the following:

- Reauthorize the Young Fishermen’s Development Act¹² through fiscal year 2031 at current authorization levels (\$2 million).
- Revise the list of eligible grant programs to ensure awards are directed to initiatives that advance the program’s purpose.
- Prohibit grant recipients from receiving a new grant through the Young Fishermen’s Development Program until their current award has expired.
- Require the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA) National Sea Grant Office to track the extent to which grants produce commercial fishermen or related occupations and incorporate that information as a key factor in evaluating future grant applications.

³Marysia Szymkowiak and Melissa Rhodes-Reese, “A Livelihoods Assessment of New Entrants Within the US Fisheries Agriculture Continuum,” *Journal of Rural Studies* 95:15–25, October 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2022.07.024>.

⁴Courtney Carotheret et al., “Graying of the Fleet in Alaska’s Fisheries Defining the Problem and Assessing Alternatives,” *Sea Grant Alaska*, <https://seagrant.uaf.edu/research/projects/summary.php?id=1002>.

⁵NOAA Fisheries, Alaska Fisheries Science Center, “Building the Next Generation of U.S. Commercial Fishermen,” last updated August 25, 2022, <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/feature-story/building-next-generation-us-commercial-fishermen>.

⁶*Ibid* at 3.

⁷NOAA Fisheries, *Fishing and Farming: A Generational Crisis*, research brief, August 2022, https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/s3/2022-08/FarmvsFish_ReportBrief-508.pdf.

⁸Public Law 116–289.

⁹*Ibid* at 3.

¹⁰“Young Fishermen’s Career Development Program,” NOAA Sea Grant, 2025, <https://seagrant.noaa.gov/how-we-work/topics/youngfishermen/>.

¹¹Gillian Dohrn, “Funding Cuts Threaten Career Development Programs for Aging Fishing Industry,” *Future Tides*, May 28, 2025, <https://www.futuretides.org/federal-funding-cuts-workforce-development-wa-sea-grant-commercial-fishing/>.

¹²Public Law 116–289.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

S. 2357 was introduced on July 17, 2025, by Senator Sullivan (for himself and Senators Murkowski, Wicker, and Markey) and was referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate. Senator Hyde-Smith is an additional cosponsor. On October 21, 2025, the Committee met in open Executive Session and, by voice vote, ordered S. 2357 reported favorably with an amendment (in the nature of a substitute).

H.R. 3692, the Captain Accursio “Gus” Sanfilippo Young Fishermen’s Development Act, was introduced on June 3, 2025, by Representative Moulton (for himself and Representatives Begich, Tokuda, Del. Radewagen, and Golden) and was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives. Representatives Fitzpatrick, Wittman, Lawler, and Nunn are additional cosponsors. On September 17, 2025, that Committee met in open Executive Session and, by unanimous consent, ordered H.R. 3692 reported favorably. On March 3, 2026, H.R. 3692 passed the House under suspension of the rules by voice vote.

ESTIMATED COSTS

In accordance with paragraph 11(a) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate and section 403 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the Committee provides the following cost estimate, prepared by the Congressional Budget Office:

S. 2357, Young Fishermen’s Development Program Reauthorization Act			
As ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation on October 21, 2025			
By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars	2026	2026-2030	2026-2035
Direct Spending (Outlays)	0	0	0
Revenues	0	0	0
Increase or Decrease (-) in the Deficit	0	0	0
Spending Subject to Appropriation (Outlays)	0	7	10
Increases <i>net direct spending</i> in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2036?	No	Statutory pay-as-you-go procedures apply?	No
		Mandate Effects	
Increases <i>on-budget deficits</i> in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2036?	No	Contains intergovernmental mandate?	No
		Contains private-sector mandate?	No

S. 2357 would reauthorize the appropriation of \$2 million each year from 2027 through 2031 for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to provide grants for training, education, outreach, and technical assistance to young fishermen. In 2024, the Congress appropriated \$1 million for the program.

The bill also would require NOAA to collect information about fishermen who participated in the program and remained in the industry to assess the program’s effectiveness and to modify eligibility for future grants.

The costs of the legislation, detailed in Table 1, fall within budget function 300 (natural resources and environment).

TABLE 1.—ESTIMATED INCREASES IN SPENDING SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATION UNDER S. 2357

	By fiscal year, millions of dollars—					
	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2026– 2030
Authorization	0	2	2	2	2	8
Estimated Outlays	0	1	2	2	2	7

CBO assumes that the bill will be enacted by the end of 2025 and that the authorized amounts will be provided in each year. Based on historical spending patterns for similar activities, CBO estimates that implementing S. 2357 would cost \$7 million over the 2026–2030 period and \$3 million after 2030.

On October 31, 2025, CBO transmitted a cost estimate for H.R. 3692, a bill to reauthorize the Young Fishermen’s Development Act, as ordered reported by the House Committee on Natural Resources on September 17, 2025. The bills are similar and their estimated budgetary effects are the same.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Aurora Swanson. The estimate was reviewed by H. Samuel Papenfuss, Deputy Director of Budget Analysis.

PHILLIP L. SWAGEL,
Director, Congressional Budget Office.

REGULATORY IMPACT STATEMENT

In accordance with paragraph 11(b) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee provides the following evaluation of the regulatory impact of the legislation, as reported:

NUMBER OF PERSONS COVERED

S. 2357, as reported, would not subject individuals to new regulations.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

S. 2357, as reported, is not expected to have any significant adverse impacts on the Nation’s economy.

PRIVACY

S. 2357, as reported, would not have any adverse impact on the personal privacy of individuals.

PAPERWORK

S. 2357, as reported, would not impose additional paperwork requirements on businesses. However, it could require prior grant recipients to provide information on the outcomes of their awards, including whether the grant contributed to the training or employment of new commercial fishermen or related occupations. The bill could also direct the administering office to implement new procedures for tracking grant outcomes to better inform the evaluation of future applications.

CONGRESSIONALLY DIRECTED SPENDING

In compliance with paragraph 4(b) of rule XLIV of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee provides that no provisions

contained in the bill, as reported, meet the definition of congressionally directed spending items under the rule.

SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

Section 1. Short title.

This section would provide that the bill may be cited as the “Young Fishermen’s Development Program Reauthorization Act”.

Section 2. Reauthorization of the Young Fishermen’s Development Act.

This section would amend the initiatives eligible to be awarded grants under this program to include crew management, disaster preparedness, seafood handling, technical assistance, fishing portfolio diversification and expansion, and management of working waterfronts and related shoreside infrastructure. It would also remove the Secretary of Commerce’s discretionary authority to determine other appropriate initiatives eligible for grant awards.

This section would prohibit Young Fishermen’s Development Program grant recipients from receiving a new grant until their current award has expired. It would also require NOAA’s National Sea Grant Office to track the extent to which Program participants enter or remain in careers in commercial fishing or related industries and incorporate that information as a key factor in evaluating future grant applications.

Lastly, this section would also reauthorize the Young Fishermen’s Development Act¹³ for \$2 million for each fiscal year 2026 to 2031.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

In compliance with paragraph 12 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, changes in existing law made by the bill, as reported, are shown as follows (existing law proposed to be omitted is enclosed in black brackets, new material is printed in italic, existing law in which no change is proposed is shown in roman):

YOUNG FISHERMEN’S DEVELOPMENT ACT

* * * * *

[33 U.S.C. 1141 et seq.]

SEC. 2. * * *

SEC. 3. * * *

SEC. 4. GRANTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out the Program, the Secretary shall make competitive grants to support new and established local and regional training, education, outreach, and technical assistance initiatives for young fishermen, including programs, workshops, and services relating to—

- (1) seamanship, navigation, electronics, and safety;
- (2) vessel and engine care, maintenance, and repair;

¹³Public Law 116–289.

(3) innovative conservation fishing gear engineering and technology;

(4) sustainable fishing practices;

(5) entrepreneurship and good business practices, *including crew management and disaster preparedness*;

(6) direct marketing, supply chain, *seafood handling*, and traceability;

(7) financial and risk management, including vessel, permit, and quota purchasing;

(8) State and Federal legal requirements for specific fisheries, including reporting, monitoring, licenses, and regulations;

(9) State and Federal fisheries policy and management;

(10) *technical assistance*, mentoring, apprenticeships, or internships; [and]

[(11) any other activities, opportunities, or programs, as the Secretary determines appropriate.]

(11) *fishing portfolio diversification and expansion*; and

(12) *management of working waterfronts and related shore-side infrastructure*.

(b) * * *

(c) MAXIMUM TERM AND AMOUNT OF GRANT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—A grant under this section shall—

(A) have a term of no more than 3 fiscal years; and

(B) be in an amount that is not more than \$200,000 for each fiscal year.

(2) CONSECUTIVE GRANTS.—An eligible recipient may receive consecutive *but non-concurrent* grants under this section.

(d) * * *

(e) * * *

(f) COOPERATION AND EVALUATION CRITERIA.—[In carrying out]

(1) *IN GENERAL*.—*In carrying out this section and in developing criteria for evaluating grant applications, the Secretary shall consult, to the maximum extent practicable, with—*

[(1)](A) Sea Grant Institutions and extension agents of such institutions;

[(2)](B) community-based nongovernmental fishing organizations;

[(3)](C) Federal and State agencies, including Regional Fishery Management Councils established under the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1851 et seq.);

[(4)](D) institutions of higher education with fisheries expertise and programs; and

[(5)](E) partners, as the Secretary determines.

(2) *TRACKING, IDENTIFYING, AND EVALUATING PROGRESS*.—*The Secretary of Commerce, acting through the National Sea Grant Office, shall, to the extent practicable, track the career progression of participants in the Program, identify those who subsequently enter or remain in commercial fisheries of the United States and the Great Lakes or related industries, and use these outcomes as a key factor in evaluating the effectiveness of, and future eligibility for, grant applications.*

(g) * * *

SEC. 5. FUNDING.

(a) **AUTHORIZATIONS.**—There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act \$2,000,000 for each of fiscal years **2022 through 2026** *2026 through 2031*.

(b) **DERIVATION.**—Funds to carry out the activities under this Act shall be derived from amounts authorized to be appropriated pursuant to the preceding subsection that are enacted after the date of the enactment of this Act.

