

113TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 4706

To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to carry out programs and activities that connect Americans, especially children, youth, and families, with the outdoors.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 21, 2014

Mr. KIND (for himself, Mr. CONNOLLY, and Mr. PRICE of North Carolina) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to carry out programs and activities that connect Americans, especially children, youth, and families, with the outdoors.

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 “Healthy Kids Outdoors
5 Act of 2014”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds as follows:

1 (1) Children today are spending less time out-
2 doors than any generation in human history, as evi-
3 denced by studies that show children enjoy half as
4 much time outdoors today as they did just 20 years
5 ago, while spending more than 7½ hours every day
6 in front of electronic media.

7 (2) The health of our children is at risk as evi-
8 denced by the growing obesity crisis where, in the
9 past 30 years, childhood obesity has more than dou-
10 bled in children and quadrupled in adolescents, cost-
11 ing the economy of the United States billions of dol-
12 lars each year.

13 (3) Our military readiness is declining as nearly
14 1 in 4 applicants to the military is rejected for being
15 overweight or obese, which is the most common rea-
16 son for medical disqualification.

17 (4) Research has shown that military children
18 and families are facing increased stress and mental
19 strain and challenges due to multiple, extended de-
20 ployments. Military family service organizations have
21 developed programs that connect military children
22 and families with positive, meaningful outdoor expe-
23 riences that benefit mental and physical health, but
24 they lack sufficient resources to meet increasing de-
25 mand.

1 (5) In addition to the negative economic impact
2 of childhood obesity, the outdoor retail industry,
3 many local tourist destinations or “gateway commu-
4 nities”, and State fish and wildlife agencies rely on
5 revenue generated when individuals spend time out-
6 doors to create jobs in local communities.

7 (6) Over the past several years, urbanization,
8 changing land use patterns, increasing road traffic,
9 and inadequate solutions to addressing these chal-
10 lenges in the built environment have combined to
11 make it more difficult for many Americans to walk
12 or bike to schools, parks, and play areas or experi-
13 ence the natural environment in general.

14 (7) Spending time in green spaces outside the
15 home, including public lands, parks, play areas, and
16 garden, can increase concentration, inhibition of ini-
17 tial impulses, and self-discipline and has been shown
18 to reduce stress and mental fatigue. In one study,
19 children who were exposed to greener environments
20 in a public housing area demonstrated less aggres-
21 sion, violence, and stress.

22 (8) Visitation to our Nation’s public lands has
23 declined or remained flat in recent years, and yet,
24 connecting with nature and the great outdoors in
25 our communities is critical to fostering the next gen-

1 eration of outdoor enthusiasts who will visit, appre-
2 ciate, and become stewards of our Nation’s public
3 lands.

4 (9) Spending time outdoors in nature is bene-
5 ficial to our children’s physical, mental, and emo-
6 tional health and has been proven to decrease symp-
7 toms of attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder,
8 stimulate brain development, improve motor skills,
9 result in better sleep, reduce stress, increase cre-
10 ativity, improve mood, and reduce children’s risk of
11 developing myopia.

12 (10) Children who spend time playing outside
13 are more likely to take risks, seek out adventure, de-
14 velop self-confidence, and respect the value of na-
15 ture. A direct childhood experience with nature be-
16 fore the age of 11 promotes a long-term connection
17 to nature.

18 (11) Conservation education and outdoor recre-
19 ation experiences such as camping, hiking, boating,
20 hunting, fishing, archery, recreational shooting, wild-
21 life watching, and others are critical to engaging
22 young people in the outdoors.

23 (12) As children become more disconnected
24 from the natural world, the hunting and angling
25 conservation legacy of America is at risk.

1 (13) Hunters and anglers play a critical role in
2 reconnecting young people with nature, protecting
3 our natural resources, and fostering a lifelong un-
4 derstanding of the value of conserving the natural
5 world.

6 (14) Research demonstrates that hunters who
7 become engaged in hunting as children are among
8 the most active and interested hunters as adults.
9 The vast majority of hunters report they were intro-
10 duced to hunting between the ages of 10 and 12,
11 and the overwhelming majority of children are intro-
12 duced to hunting by an adult.

13 (15) Parks and recreation, youth-serving, serv-
14 ice-learning, conservation, health, education, and
15 built-environment organizations, facilities, and per-
16 sonnel provide critical resources and infrastructure
17 for connecting children and families with nature.

18 (16) It takes many dedicated men and women
19 to work to preserve, protect, enhance, and restore
20 America's natural resources, and with an aging
21 workforce in the natural resource professions, it is
22 critical for the next generation to have an apprecia-
23 tion for nature and be ready to take over these re-
24 sponsibilities.

1 (17) Place-based service-learning opportunities
2 use our lands and waters as the context for learning
3 by engaging students in the process of exploration,
4 action, and reflection. Physical activity outdoors con-
5 nected with meaningful community service to solve
6 real-world problems, such as removing invasive
7 plants or removing trash from a streambed,
8 strengthens communities by engaging youth as cit-
9 izen stewards.

10 (18) States nationwide and their community
11 based partners have some notable programs that
12 connect children and families with nature; however,
13 most States lack sufficient resources and a com-
14 prehensive strategy to effectively engage State agen-
15 cies across multiple fields.

16 (19) States need to engage in cross-sector agen-
17 cy and nonprofit collaboration that involves public
18 health and wellness, parks and recreation, transpor-
19 tation and city planning, and other sectors focused
20 on connecting children and families with the out-
21 doors to increase coordination and effective imple-
22 mentation of the policy tools and programs that a
23 State can bring to bear to provide outdoor opportu-
24 nities for children and families.

1 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

2 In this Act:

3 (1) **ELIGIBLE ENTITY.**—The term “eligible enti-
4 ty” means—

5 (A) a State; or

6 (B) a consortium from one State that may
7 include such State and municipalities, entities
8 of local or tribal governments, parks and recre-
9 ation departments or districts, school districts,
10 institutions of higher education, or nonprofit or-
11 ganizations.

12 (2) **LOCAL PARTNERS.**—The term “local part-
13 ners” means a municipality, entity of local or tribal
14 government, parks and recreation departments or
15 districts, Indian tribe, school district, institution of
16 higher education, nonprofit organization, or a con-
17 sortium of local partners.

18 (3) **SECRETARY.**—The term “Secretary” means
19 the Secretary of the Interior.

20 (4) **STATE.**—The term “State” means any of
21 the several States, the District of Columbia, the
22 Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the United States
23 Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Com-
24 monwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, any
25 other territory or possession of the United States, or
26 any Indian tribe.

1 **SEC. 4. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS FOR DEVELOPMENT**
2 **OR IMPLEMENTATION OF HEALTHY KIDS**
3 **OUTDOORS STATE STRATEGIES.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary is authorized to
5 issue one cooperative agreement per State to eligible enti-
6 ties to develop, implement, and update a 5-year State
7 strategy, to be known as a “Healthy Kids Outdoors State
8 Strategy”, designed to encourage Americans, especially
9 children, youth, and families, to be physically active out-
10 doors.

11 (b) SUBMISSION AND APPROVAL OF STRATEGIES.—

12 (1) APPLICATIONS.—An application for a coop-
13 erative agreement under subsection (a) shall—

14 (A) be submitted not later than 120 days
15 after the Secretary publishes guidelines under
16 subsection (f)(1); and

17 (B) include a Healthy Kids Outdoors State
18 Strategy meeting the requirements of sub-
19 section (c) or a proposal for development and
20 submission of such a strategy.

21 (2) APPROVAL OF STRATEGY; PEER REVIEW.—

22 Not later than 90 days after submission of a
23 Healthy Kids Outdoors State Strategy, the Sec-
24 retary shall, through a peer review process, approve
25 or recommend changes to the strategy.

1 (3) STRATEGY UPDATE.—An eligible entity re-
2 ceiving funds under this section shall update its
3 Healthy Kids Outdoors State Strategy at least once
4 every 5 years. Continued funding under this section
5 shall be contingent upon submission of such updated
6 strategies and reports that document impact evalua-
7 tion methods consistent with the guidelines in sub-
8 section (f)(1) and lessons learned from implementing
9 the strategy.

10 (c) COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY REQUIREMENTS.—
11 The Healthy Kids Outdoors State Strategy under sub-
12 section (a) shall include—

13 (1) a description of how the eligible entity will
14 encourage Americans, especially children, youth, and
15 families, to be physically active in the outdoors
16 through State, local, and tribal—

17 (A) public health systems;

18 (B) public parks and recreation systems;

19 (C) public transportation and city planning
20 systems; and

21 (D) other public systems that connect
22 Americans, especially children, youth, and fami-
23 lies, to the outdoors;

24 (2) a description of how the eligible entity will
25 partner with nongovernmental organizations, espe-

1 cially those that serve children, youth, and families,
2 including those serving military families and tribal
3 agencies;

4 (3) a description of how State agencies will col-
5 laborate with each other to implement the strategy;

6 (4) a description of how funding will be spent
7 through local planning and implementation sub-
8 grants under subsection (d);

9 (5) a description of how the eligible entity will
10 evaluate the effectiveness of, and measure the im-
11 pact of, the strategy, including an estimate of the
12 costs associated with such evaluation;

13 (6) a description of how the eligible entity will
14 provide opportunities for public involvement in devel-
15 oping and implementing the strategy;

16 (7) a description of how the strategy will in-
17 crease visitation to Federal public lands within the
18 State; and

19 (8) a description of how the eligible entity will
20 leverage private funds to expand opportunities and
21 further implement the strategy.

22 (d) LOCAL PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION.—

23 (1) IN GENERAL.—A Healthy Kids Outdoors
24 State Strategy shall provide for subgrants by the co-
25 operative agreement recipient under subsection (a)

1 to local partners to implement the strategy through
2 one or more of the program activities described in
3 paragraph (2).

4 (2) PROGRAM ACTIVITIES.—Program activities
5 may include—

6 (A) implementing outdoor recreation and
7 youth mentoring programs that provide oppor-
8 tunities to experience the outdoors, be phys-
9 ically active, and teach skills for lifelong partici-
10 pation in outdoor activities, including fishing,
11 hunting, recreational shooting, archery, hiking,
12 camping, outdoor play in natural environments,
13 and wildlife watching;

14 (B) implementing programs that connect
15 communities with safe parks, green spaces, and
16 outdoor recreation areas through affordable
17 public transportation and trail systems that en-
18 courage walking, biking, and increased physical
19 activity outdoors;

20 (C) implementing school-based programs
21 that use outdoor learning environments, such as
22 wildlife habitats or gardens, and programs that
23 use service learning to restore natural areas
24 and maintain recreational assets; and

1 (D) implementing education programs for
2 parents and caregivers about the health benefits
3 of active time outdoors to fight obesity and in-
4 crease the quality of life for Americans, espe-
5 cially children, youth, and families.

6 (e) PRIORITY.—In making cooperative agreements
7 under subsection (a) and subgrants under subsection
8 (d)(1), the Secretary and the recipient under subsection
9 (a), respectively, shall give preference to entities that serve
10 individuals who have limited opportunities to experience
11 nature, including those who are socioeconomically dis-
12 advantaged or have a disability or suffer disproportion-
13 ately from physical and mental health stressors.

14 (f) GUIDELINES.—Not later than 180 days after the
15 date of the enactment of this Act, and after notice and
16 opportunity for public comment, the Secretary shall pub-
17 lish in the Federal Register guidelines on the implementa-
18 tion of this Act, including guidelines for—

19 (1) developing and submitting strategies and
20 evaluation methods under subsection (b); and

21 (2) technical assistance and dissemination of
22 best practices under section 7.

23 (g) REPORTING.—Not later than 2 years after the
24 Secretary approves the Healthy Kids Outdoors State
25 Strategy of an eligible entity receiving funds under this

1 section, and every year thereafter, the eligible entity shall
2 submit to the Secretary a report on the implementation
3 of the strategy based on the entity's evaluation and assess-
4 ment of meeting the goals specified in the strategy.

5 (h) ALLOCATION OF FUNDS.—An eligible entity re-
6 ceiving funding under subsection (a) for a fiscal year—

7 (1) may use not more than 5 percent of the
8 funding for administrative expenses; and

9 (2) shall use at least 95 percent of the funding
10 for subgrants to local partners under subsection (d).

11 (i) MATCH.—An eligible entity receiving funding
12 under subsection (a) for a fiscal year shall provide a 25-
13 percent match through in-kind contributions or cash.

14 **SEC. 5. NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR ENCOURAGING AMERI-**
15 **CANS TO BE ACTIVE OUTDOORS.**

16 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than September 30,
17 2015, the President, in cooperation with appropriate Fed-
18 eral departments and agencies, shall develop and issue a
19 national strategy for encouraging Americans, especially
20 children, youth, and families, to be physically active out-
21 doors. Such a strategy shall include—

22 (1) identification of barriers to Americans, es-
23 pecially children, youth, and families, spending
24 healthy time outdoors and specific policy solutions to
25 address those barriers;

1 (2) identification of opportunities for partner-
2 ships with Federal, State, tribal, and local partners;

3 (3) coordination of efforts among Federal de-
4 partments and agencies to address the impacts of
5 Americans, especially children, youth, and families,
6 spending less active time outdoors on—

7 (A) public health, including childhood obe-
8 sity, attention deficit disorders and stress;

9 (B) the future of conservation in the
10 United States; and

11 (C) the economy;

12 (4) identification of ongoing research needs to
13 document the health, conservation, economic, and
14 other outcomes of implementing the national strat-
15 egy and State strategies;

16 (5) coordination and alignment with Healthy
17 Kids Outdoors State Strategies; and

18 (6) an action plan for implementing the strat-
19 egy at the Federal level.

20 (b) STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT.—

21 (1) PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.—Throughout the
22 process of developing the national strategy under
23 subsection (a), the President may use, incorporate,
24 or otherwise consider existing Federal plans and
25 strategies that, in whole or in part, contribute to

1 connecting Americans, especially children, youth,
2 and families, with the outdoors and shall provide for
3 public participation, including a national summit of
4 participants with demonstrated expertise in encour-
5 aging individuals to be physically active outdoors in
6 nature.

7 (2) UPDATING THE NATIONAL STRATEGY.—The
8 President shall update the national strategy not less
9 than 5 years after the date the first national strat-
10 egy is issued under subsection (a), and every 5 years
11 thereafter. In updating the strategy, the President
12 shall incorporate results of the evaluation under sec-
13 tion 6.

14 **SEC. 6. NATIONAL EVALUATION OF HEALTH IMPACTS.**

15 The Secretary, in coordination with the Secretary of
16 Health and Human Services, shall—

17 (1) develop recommendations for appropriate
18 evaluation measures and criteria for a study of na-
19 tional significance on the health impacts of the
20 strategies under this Act; and

21 (2) carry out such a study.

22 **SEC. 7. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND BEST PRACTICES.**

23 The Secretary shall—

24 (1) provide technical assistance to grantees
25 under section 4 through cooperative agreements with

1 national organizations with a proven track record of
2 encouraging Americans, especially children, youth,
3 and families, to be physically active outdoors; and

4 (2) disseminate best practices that emerge from
5 strategies funded under this Act.

6 **SEC. 8. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be appro-
8 priated to the Secretary to carry out this Act—

9 (1) \$1,000,000 for fiscal year 2015;

10 (2) \$2,000,000 for fiscal year 2016; and

11 (3) \$3,000,000 for fiscal year 2017.

12 (b) LIMITATION.—Of the amounts made available to
13 carry out this Act for a fiscal year, not more than 5 per-
14 cent may be made available for carrying out section 7.

15 (c) SUPPLEMENT, NOT SUPPLANT.—Funds made
16 available under this Act shall be used to supplement, and
17 not supplant, any other Federal, State, or local funds
18 available for activities that encourage Americans, espe-
19 cially children, youth, and families to be physically active
20 outdoors.

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