

113TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 2705

To establish, within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an integrated and comprehensive ocean, coastal, Great Lakes, and atmospheric research and environmental information sharing program to support renewable energy, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 30, 2014

Mr. BEGICH introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

A BILL

To establish, within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, an integrated and comprehensive ocean, coastal, Great Lakes, and atmospheric research and environmental information sharing program to support renewable energy, 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 “Renewable Energy En-
5 vironmental Research Act of 2014”.

1 **SEC. 2. PURPOSE.**

2 The purpose of this Act is to establish an integrated
3 and comprehensive ocean, coastal, Great Lakes, and at-
4 mospheric research and environmental information shar-
5 ing program to support renewable energy.

6 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

7 In this Act:

8 (1) **ADMINISTRATION.**—The term “Administra-
9 tion” means the National Oceanic and Atmospheric
10 Administration.

11 (2) **ADMINISTRATOR.**—The term “Adminis-
12 trator” means the Under Secretary for Oceans and
13 Atmosphere in the Under Secretary’s capacity as
14 Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmos-
15 pheric Administration.

16 (3) **RENEWABLE ENERGY.**—The term “renew-
17 able energy” means any form of renewable energy,
18 including traditional hydropower, terrestrial renew-
19 able energy, and renewable energy derived from the
20 sea, such as wave energy, tidal energy, ocean current
21 energy, offshore wind energy, salinity gradient en-
22 ergy, ocean thermal gradient energy, and ocean ther-
23 mal energy conversion.

1 **SEC. 4. RENEWABLE ENERGY RESEARCH PLAN.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 3 years after the
3 date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall
4 develop a plan—

5 (1) to define requirements for a comprehensive
6 and integrated ocean, coastal, Great Lakes, and at-
7 mosphere science program to support renewable en-
8 ergy development in the United States based on a
9 review of scientific and industry information;

10 (2) to identify and describe current climate,
11 weather, and water data programs, products, serv-
12 ices, and authorities within the Administration rel-
13 evant to renewable energy development;

14 (3) to provide targeted research, data, moni-
15 toring, observation, and other information, products,
16 and services concerning climate, weather, and water
17 in support of renewable energy and “smart grid”
18 technology, including research to accurately quantify
19 the downstream micro-climate impacts of wind-
20 power turbines;

21 (4) to reduce duplication and leverage the re-
22 sources of existing Administration programs through
23 coordination with—

24 (A) other offices and programs within the
25 Administration, including the atmospheric,
26 ocean, and coastal observation systems;

1 (B) Federal, State, tribal, and local obser-
2 vation systems; and

3 (C) other entities, including the private
4 sector organizations and institutions of higher
5 education;

6 (5) to facilitate public-private cooperation, in-
7 cluding identification and assessment of current pri-
8 vate sector capabilities; and

9 (6) to inform and educate the public and the
10 private sector about the progress and findings of the
11 renewable research and development carried out pur-
12 suant to the plan.

13 (b) PUBLIC HEARINGS.—In developing the plan, the
14 Administrator shall provide public notice and opportunity
15 for 1 or more public hearings and shall seek comments
16 from Federal and State agencies, tribes, local govern-
17 ments, representatives of the private sector, and other par-
18 ties interested in renewable energy observations, data, and
19 use in order to improve Administration climate, weather,
20 and water observation data products and services to more
21 effectively support renewable energy development.

22 **SEC. 5. ESTABLISHMENT OF RESEARCH, PREDICTION, AND**
23 **ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION PROGRAM.**

24 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 3 years after the
25 date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall

1 establish a program to develop and implement an inte-
2 grated and comprehensive ocean, coastal, Great Lakes,
3 and atmosphere research and operations program, based
4 on the plan required by section 4, to support renewable
5 energy development in the United States.

6 (b) PROGRAM COMPONENTS.—At a minimum, the
7 program required by subsection (a) shall include the fol-
8 lowing:

9 (1) Improvements in coordinated climate,
10 weather, water research, biological and technological
11 research monitoring, and observations to support re-
12 newable energy siting and development.

13 (2) Coordinated weather, water, and climate
14 prediction capability focused on renewable energy
15 and “smart grid” technology to provide information
16 and decision services in support of renewable energy
17 development.

18 (3) Support for the transition to, and reliable
19 delivery of, sustained operational weather, water,
20 and climate products from research, observation,
21 and prediction outputs.

22 (4) Means of identifying biological and ecologi-
23 cal effects of marine renewable energy development
24 on living marine resources, the marine and coastal

1 environment, marine-dependent industries, and
2 coastal communities.

3 (5) Baseline ecological characterization, includ-
4 ing research, data collection, and mapping, of the
5 coastal and marine environment and living marine
6 resources for marine renewable energy development.

7 (6) Avoidance, minimization, and mitigation
8 strategies to address the potential impacts of renew-
9 able energy on the marine, coastal, and Great Lakes
10 habitats resources and communities, including devel-
11 oping effective monitoring protocols, use of adaptive
12 management, informed engineering design and oper-
13 ating parameters, and the establishment of protocols
14 for minimizing the environmental impacts of testing,
15 developing, and deploying marine renewable energy
16 devices.

17 (7) Support for the development of marine spe-
18 cial area management plans by states as defined by
19 the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (16
20 U.S.C. 1451 et seq.) that would support renewable
21 energy development consistent with natural resource
22 protection and other coastal-dependent economic
23 growth.

24 (8) Coordination of comprehensive digital map-
25 ping, modeling, and other geospatial information and

1 services to support planning for renewable energy
2 and stewardship of ecosystem and living marine eco-
3 systems, including protected species, in ocean, Great
4 Lakes, and coastal areas.

5 (9) A coordinated approach for examining and
6 quantifying the micro-climate impacts of wind-power
7 farms on soil transpiration and drying.

8 (10) Provision for outreach to the public and
9 private sector about program research, information,
10 and products, including making non-proprietary in-
11 formation and best management practices developed
12 under this program available to the public.

13 (c) USE IN AGENCY DECISIONS.—The program es-
14 tablished under subsection (a) shall be designed to collect,
15 synthesize, and distribute data in a manner that can be
16 used by resource managers responsible for making deci-
17 sions about renewable energy projects. The Army Corps
18 of Engineers, Department of Commerce, Bureau of Ocean
19 Energy Management, Federal Energy Regulatory Com-
20 mission, and Department of Energy shall consider this in-
21 formation when making planning, siting, and permitting
22 decisions for renewable energy.

23 (d) SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC-PRIVATE COOPERA-
24 TION.—To the extent practicable, in implementing the
25 program established under this section, the Administrator

1 shall seek appropriate opportunities to facilitate and ex-
2 pand cooperation with private sector entities to develop
3 and expand information services that serve the renewable
4 energy industry.

5 **SEC. 6. BIENNIAL REPORTS.**

6 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years after the
7 date on which the Administrator establishes the program
8 under section 5(a) and not less frequently than once every
9 2 years thereafter, the Administrator shall submit to the
10 Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of
11 the Senate and the Committee on Natural Resources and
12 the Committee on Science and Technology of the House
13 of Representatives a report on progress made in imple-
14 menting this Act.

15 (b) CONTENTS.—Each report submitted under sub-
16 section (a) shall include the following:

17 (1) A description of activities carried out under
18 this Act.

19 (2) Recommendations for prioritization of ac-
20 tivities under this Act for fiscal years beginning
21 after the date on which the report is submitted.

22 (3) Funding levels for activities under this Act
23 in those fiscal years.

1 **SEC. 7. LIBRARY.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 3 years after the
3 date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator, in
4 consultation with relevant Federal agencies, shall establish
5 and maintain a renewable energy information library and
6 data portal to function as a common, cross agency reposi-
7 tory of data pertinent to renewable energy development.

8 (b) ELEMENTS.—The library required by subsection
9 (a) shall include, at a minimum, the following:

10 (1) Links to data and information products for
11 use in renewable energy development.

12 (2) Links to planning and decision support
13 tools for use in renewable energy development.

14 (3) Data about the baseline condition of ocean
15 and coastal resources.

16 (4) Links to digital mapping and geospatial in-
17 formation, products, and services described in sec-
18 tion 4(b).

19 **SEC. 8. FEDERAL COORDINATION.**

20 The Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of En-
21 ergy, the Secretary of Transportation, the Secretary of
22 Defense, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, the
23 Department in which the Coast Guard is operating, and
24 the heads of other relevant Federal agencies shall cooper-
25 ate with the Administrator in carrying out this Act.

1 **SEC. 9. AGREEMENTS.**

2 The Administrator may enter into and perform such
3 contracts, leases, grants, cooperative agreements, or other
4 agreements and transactions with any agency or instru-
5 mentality of the United States, or with any State, local,
6 tribal, territorial or foreign government, or with any per-
7 son, corporation, firm, partnership, educational institu-
8 tion, nonprofit organization, or international organization
9 as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of this Act.

10 **SEC. 10. AUTHORITY TO RECEIVE FUNDS.**

11 The Administrator may accept, retain, and use funds
12 received from any party pursuant to an agreement entered
13 into under section 9 for activities furthering the purposes
14 of this Act.

15 **SEC. 11. USE OF OCEAN OBSERVING OFFSHORE INFRA-**
16 **STRUCTURE.**

17 (a) IN GENERAL.—Any offshore exploration and pro-
18 duction facility, at the discretion of the Administrator,
19 may execute a memorandum of understanding authorizing
20 the use of offshore platforms and infrastructure for the
21 placement of meteorological and oceanographic observa-
22 tion sensors of a type to be designated by the Adminis-
23 trator in support of the Integrated Ocean Observing Sys-
24 tem.

25 (b) AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION.—All informa-
26 tion collected by such sensors shall be managed by Admin-

1 istration and be readily available for use in spill and other
2 hazard response as well as available to the National
3 Weather Service, other Administration programs, and the
4 general public.

5 **SEC. 12. SAVINGS PROVISION.**

6 Nothing in this Act shall be construed to supersede
7 or modify the jurisdiction, responsibilities, or authority of
8 any Federal or State agency under any provision of law
9 in effect on the date of the enactment of this Act.

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