

114TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 6155

To amend the Wilderness Act to ensure access to wilderness areas by Federal, State, and local emergency response personnel during an emergency, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 22, 2016

Mr. MEADOWS introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on Agriculture, 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 amend the Wilderness Act to ensure access to wilderness areas by Federal, State, and local emergency response personnel during an emergency, 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 “Ensuring Safety of
5 Federal Wilderness Areas Act of 2016”.

1 **SEC. 2. EMERGENCY RESPONSE IN WILDERNESS AREAS**
2 **MANAGED BY THE FOREST SERVICE AND BU-**
3 **REAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT.**

4 Section 4(c) of the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C.
5 1133(c)) is amended—

6 (1) by inserting “(1)” after “(c)”; and

7 (2) by adding at the end the following new
8 paragraph:

9 “(2)(A) In order to ensure adequate response to
10 emergencies described in paragraph (1), the Secretary
11 concerned may not adopt, amend, or enforce any regula-
12 tion, policy, practice, or guidance that would delay Fed-
13 eral, State, or local emergency response personnel from
14 entering a wilderness area or wilderness study area in re-
15 sponse to an emergency. Any entrance by Federal, State,
16 or local emergency response personnel into a wilderness
17 area or wilderness study area in response to an emergency
18 shall be reported to the Secretary concerned within 24
19 hours from the time at which the emergency response per-
20 sonnel first entered the area. Nothing in this subsection
21 shall be construed as barring motorized vehicles, motor-
22 ized equipment or motorboats, aircraft, or other forms of
23 mechanical transport from a wilderness area or wilderness
24 study area when employed by Federal, State, or local
25 emergency response personnel in response to an emer-
26 gency.

1 “(B) In this paragraph, the term ‘Secretary con-
2 cerned’ means—

3 “(i) with respect to wilderness areas and wilder-
4 ness study areas under the jurisdiction of the Forest
5 Service, the Secretary of Agriculture; and

6 “(ii) with respect to wilderness areas and wil-
7 derness study areas under the jurisdiction of the Bu-
8 reau of Land Management, the Secretary of the In-
9 terior.”.

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