

We know that every parcel of land the Federal Government transfers or sells has to be appraised. Right now, we have a backlog of transfers waiting on approval because of a shortage of appraisals. That is delaying affordable housing construction, conservation efforts, and critical infrastructure projects that we really need in Nevada.

I thank my colleagues in joining me in cutting through this government redtape.

This act was authored by me here in the Senate but also my colleague Congresswoman SUSIE LEE in the House. It will speed up land transfers at no additional cost to the American taxpayer by giving private appraisers the same flexibility as the government to be part of this process. In my home State of Nevada, where over 80 percent of the land is owned by the Federal Government, that is a big deal.

This is a commonsense bipartisan solution. I am so grateful we were able to pass it today.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

#### THE CALENDAR

Mr. WICKER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of the following bills en bloc: Calendar No. 588, S. 2620, Chesapeake National Recreation Area Act, and Calendar No. 636, S. 4994, Vicksburg National Military Park Boundary Modification.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bills en bloc.

Mr. WICKER. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported substitute amendment, where applicable, be agreed to; that the bills, as amended, where applicable, be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, all en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bills passed en bloc as follows:

#### CHESAPEAKE NATIONAL RECREATION AREA ACT

A bill (S. 2620), to establish the Chesapeake National Recreation Area as a unit of the National Park System, and for other purposes, which had been reported from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following:

##### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Chesapeake National Recreation Area Act”.

##### SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) **ADVISORY COMMISSION.**—The term “Advisory Commission” means the Chesapeake National Recreation Area Advisory Commission established under section 9(a).

(2) **BAY.**—The term “Bay” means the Chesapeake Bay, including its tidal tributaries, in Maryland and Virginia.

(3) **BAY PROGRAM.**—The term “Bay Program” means the Chesapeake Bay Program authorized under section 117 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1267).

(4) **CHESAPEAKE GATEWAYS.**—The term “Chesapeake Gateways” means the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network authorized under section 502 of the Chesapeake Bay Initiative Act of 1998 (54 U.S.C. 320101 note; Public Law 105–312).

(5) **MAP.**—The term “Map” means the map entitled “Chesapeake National Recreation Area Proposed Boundary”, numbered P99/189631, and dated June 2023 (5 pages).

(6) **NATIONAL RECREATION AREA.**—The term “National Recreation Area” means the Chesapeake National Recreation Area established by section 3(a).

(7) **SECRETARY.**—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Interior.

(8) **YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE.**—The term “youth representative” means a member of the Advisory Commission who—

(A) has not attained the age of 22 as of the date on which the member is appointed or reappointed; and

(B) is tasked with representing the interests of children and young adults in the State from which the member is appointed.

##### SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT AND BOUNDARIES OF CHESAPEAKE NATIONAL RECREATION AREA.

(a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Subject to paragraph (2), there is established the Chesapeake National Recreation Area in the States of Maryland and Virginia as a unit of the National Park System to preserve, protect, interpret, and provide for the public enjoyment of, and access to, the natural, cultural, historic, and recreational resources relating to the Bay and surrounding areas.

(2) **DETERMINATION BY THE SECRETARY.**—The National Recreation Area shall not be established until the date on which the Secretary determines that a sufficient quantity of land or interests in land has been acquired to constitute a manageable park unit.

(3) **NOTICE.**—Not later than 30 days after the Secretary makes a determination under paragraph (2), the Secretary shall publish in the Federal Register notice of the establishment of the National Recreation Area.

(b) **BOUNDARY.**—The boundary of the National Recreation Area shall include any area acquired by the Secretary from sites depicted on the Map.

(c) **AVAILABILITY OF MAP.**—The Map shall be on file and available for public inspection in the appropriate offices of the National Park Service.

(d) **REVISION OF FORT MONROE NATIONAL MONUMENT BOUNDARY.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—At such time as the Secretary determines that the land identified on the Map within the boundary of Fort Monroe National Monument established by Proclamation 8750, dated November 1, 2011 (54 U.S.C. 320301 note; 76 Fed. Reg. 68625), has been remediated and is appropriate for inclusion in the National Recreation Area—

(A) administrative jurisdiction over the land shall be transferred from the Secretary of the Army to the Secretary for inclusion in the National Recreation Area; and

(B) the boundary of the Fort Monroe National Monument shall be revised to exclude all land and interests in land within the North Beach area of the Monument (as in existence on the day before the date of enactment of this Act), as generally depicted on the Map.

(2) **REFERENCES TO NATIONAL RECREATION AREA.**—Any reference in any law, regulation, document, record, map, or other paper of the United States to the land described in paragraph (1) shall be considered to be a reference to the National Recreation Area.

(3) **INTERIM ADMINISTRATION.**—Until the date on which administrative jurisdiction over the

land is transferred to the Secretary under paragraph (1), the Secretary of the Army shall continue to administer the land described in that paragraph that was under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Army as of the day before the date of enactment of this Act in accordance with the memorandum of agreement between the Secretary of the Army and the Secretary entitled “Memorandum of Agreement Between the Department of the Army and the Department of the Interior for Fort Monroe National Monument” and dated December 9, 2016.

(4) **BOUNDARY REVISION.**—On transfer of administrative jurisdiction over the land to the Secretary under paragraph (1), the boundary of the National Recreation Area shall be revised to include the land transferred under that paragraph, which shall be administered in accordance with the laws applicable to the National Recreation Area.

##### SEC. 4. ACQUISITION OF LAND FOR THE CHESAPEAKE NATIONAL RECREATION AREA.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Subject to subsection (c), the Secretary may acquire land or interests in land within the boundary of the National Recreation Area by—

(1) donation;

(2) purchase from a willing seller with donated or appropriated funds;

(3) exchange; or

(4) transfer from another Federal agency.

(b) **ADDITIONAL SITES.**—The Secretary, in consultation with the Advisory Commission, may—

(1) identify additional sites near or adjacent to the Bay for potential addition to the National Recreation Area; and

(2) subject to the availability of appropriations, assess whether sites identified under paragraph (1)—

(A) are appropriate for addition to the National Recreation Area; and

(B) meet National Park Service criteria applicable to additions to units of the National Park System.

(c) **LIMITATION.**—Any land or interest in land owned by a State or a political subdivision of a State that is within the boundary of the National Recreation Area may be acquired only by donation.

(d) **CONDEMNATION.**—No land or interest in land may be acquired for the National Recreation Area by condemnation.

##### SEC. 5. ADMINISTRATION.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary shall administer the National Recreation Area in accordance with—

(1) this section; and

(2) the laws generally applicable to units of the National Park System, including—

(A) sections 100101(a), 100751(a), 100752, 100753, and 102101 of title 54, United States Code; and

(B) chapters 1003 and 3201 of title 54, United States Code.

(b) **HEADQUARTERS.**—To facilitate coordination of the National Recreation Area with the Chesapeake Gateways program and the Bay Program, the Secretary may locate the headquarters of the National Recreation Area at the Chesapeake Bay Office of the National Park Service.

(c) **ADMINISTRATIVE, INTERPRETIVE, AND VISITOR SERVICE SITES.**—The Secretary may acquire, in accordance with section 4(a), not more than 10 acres outside the boundary of the National Recreation Area for administrative, interpretive, and visitor service purposes.

(d) **COMMERCIAL AND RECREATIONAL FISHING.**—Nothing in this Act affects statutory or regulatory authority with respect to navigation or regulation of commercial or recreational fishing activities or shellfish aquaculture in the Chesapeake Bay or its tributaries.

(e) **STATE JURISDICTION.**—Nothing in this Act enlarges or diminishes the jurisdiction of a

State, including the jurisdiction or authority of a State with respect to fish and wildlife management.

(f) COORDINATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Consistent with the purposes of the National Recreation Area, the Secretary shall coordinate the management of the National Recreation Area with the Chesapeake Gateways and the Bay Program.

(2) COORDINATION WITH NATIONAL PARK SERVICE SITES.—As a component of the management plan required under section 8, the Secretary shall, to the maximum extent practicable, coordinate the development of an implementation plan to interpret and enhance public understanding of the outstanding, remarkable, and nationally significant resources of the Bay with units of the National Park System located in the Bay watershed.

**SEC. 6. AGREEMENTS.**

The Secretary may enter into an agreement with a State, a political subdivision of a State, a nonprofit organization, or an individual to interpret and restore nationally significant historic, cultural, or recreational resources relating to the Bay if the agreement provides for reasonable public access to the resources covered by the agreement.

**SEC. 7. CHESAPEAKE GATEWAYS.**

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall administer the Chesapeake Gateways in coordination with the National Recreation Area.

(b) PERMANENT AUTHORIZATION.—Section 502(c) of the Chesapeake Bay Initiative Act of 1998 (54 U.S.C. 320101 note; Public Law 105-312) is amended by striking “is authorized” and all that follows through the period at the end and inserting “are authorized to be appropriated such sums as are necessary to carry out this section.”.

(c) EFFECT.—Nothing in this section or an amendment made by this section modifies the eligibility criteria developed under section 502(b)(2) of the Chesapeake Bay Initiative Act of 1998 (54 U.S.C. 320101 note; Public Law 105-312).

**SEC. 8. MANAGEMENT PLAN.**

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 3 years after the date on which funds are first made available for the preparation of a management plan for the National Recreation Area, the Secretary, in consultation with the Chesapeake Executive Council (as defined in section 117(a) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1267(a))) and the Advisory Commission, shall prepare a management plan for the National Recreation Area in accordance with section 100502 of title 54, United States Code.

(b) VISITOR FACILITIES.—In preparing the management plan under subsection (a), the Secretary shall consider the inclusion of visitor facilities for the National Recreation Area in Annapolis, Maryland, and near Fort Monroe.

(c) TRANSPORTATION PLANNING.—As part of the management plan prepared under subsection (a), the Secretary, in consultation with State and local governments, shall seek to minimize park-related traffic impacts of the National Recreation Area on nearby communities.

**SEC. 9. CHESAPEAKE NATIONAL RECREATION AREA ADVISORY COMMISSION.**

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall establish an advisory commission, to be known as the “Chesapeake National Recreation Area Advisory Commission”.

(b) DUTIES AND AUTHORIZATIONS.—The Advisory Commission—

(1) shall—

(A) make recommendations to the Secretary on the development and implementation of the management plan required under section 8; and

(B) after consultation with the States and other interested parties, provide to the Secretary recommendations on the Bay for additional properties on the Bay to be studied for potential addition to the National Recreation Area in accordance with section 4(b); and

(2) may establish committees relating to specific National Recreation Area management issues, including education, tourism, transportation, natural resources, cultural and historic resources, and activities to raise revenue for the National Recreation Area, with membership on a committee established under this paragraph to be open to members of the Advisory Commission and individuals that are not members of the Advisory Commission.

(c) APPLICABLE LAW.—Except as otherwise provided in this section, the Advisory Commission shall be subject to—

(1) chapter 10 of title 5, United States Code (commonly known as the “Federal Advisory Committee Act”), except section 1013(b) of that title; and

(2) all other applicable laws (including regulations).

(d) MEMBERSHIP.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Advisory Commission shall be composed of 19 members, appointed by the Secretary, of whom—

(A) 9 shall be appointed from the State of Maryland, of whom—

(i) 4 shall have knowledge of environmental, recreational, cultural, or historic resources, education, or interpretation;

(ii) 1 shall represent commercial fishing interests on the Bay;

(iii) 1 shall represent agricultural interests in the watershed of the Bay;

(iv) 1 shall be a youth representative;

(v) 1 shall be selected after considering recommendations by the Governor of the State of Maryland; and

(vi) 1 shall be a representative of a federally recognized Indian Tribe or State-recognized Indian Tribe that is traditionally associated with the Bay;

(B) 9 shall be appointed from the State of Virginia, of whom—

(i) 4 shall have knowledge of environmental, recreational, cultural, or historic resources, education, or interpretation;

(ii) 1 shall represent commercial fishing interests on the Bay;

(iii) 1 shall represent agricultural interests in the watershed of the Bay;

(iv) 1 shall be a youth representative;

(v) 1 shall be selected after considering recommendations by the Governor of the State of Virginia; and

(vi) 1 shall be a representative of a federally recognized Indian Tribe or State-recognized Indian Tribe that is traditionally associated with the Bay; and

(C) 1 shall be the Executive Director of the Chesapeake Bay Commission.

(2) REQUIREMENT.—In appointing the members described in subparagraphs (A)(i) and (B)(i) of paragraph (1), the Secretary shall seek to ensure representation from communities around the Bay and broad practicable representation of the areas of knowledge described in those subparagraphs.

(e) TERMS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—A member of the Advisory Commission shall be appointed for a term of 3 years.

(2) SUCCESSION AND REAPPOINTMENT.—On expiration of the term of a member of the Advisory Commission, the member—

(A) shall continue to serve until a successor is appointed; and

(B) may be reappointed to serve an additional 3-year term.

(f) VACANCIES.—A vacancy on the Advisory Commission shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment.

(g) ELECTED POSITIONS.—

(1) CHAIRPERSON.—The Advisory Commission shall have a Chairperson who shall—

(A) be elected by the Advisory Commission; and

(B) serve for a term of 1 year, unless reelected pursuant to procedures established by the Advisory Commission under subsection (h)(1).

(2) VICE CHAIRPERSON.—The Advisory Commission shall have a Vice Chairperson who shall—

(A) be elected by the Advisory Commission;

(B) serve for a term of 1 year, unless reelected pursuant to procedures established by the Advisory Commission under subsection (h)(1); and

(C) serve as Chairperson in the absence of the Chairperson.

(3) OTHER POSITIONS.—The Advisory Commission may establish other positions and elect members to serve in those positions as the Advisory Commission determines to be appropriate, subject to subsection (h).

(h) PROCEDURES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraphs (2) through (6) and any applicable laws (including regulations), the Advisory Commission may establish such rules and procedures for conducting the affairs of the Advisory Commission as the Advisory Commission determines to be necessary.

(2) MEETINGS.—The Advisory Commission shall meet at the call of—

(A) the Chairperson; or

(B) a majority of the appointed members.

(3) QUORUM.—A quorum shall consist of not less than 11 of the members of the Advisory Commission.

(4) ACTIONS OF THE ADVISORY COMMISSION.—Any action of the Advisory Commission shall require a majority vote of the members present at any meeting.

(5) VIRTUAL MEETINGS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Meetings of the Advisory Commission may be conducted virtually, in whole or in part.

(B) REQUEST.—Any member of the Advisory Commission may request permission from the Chairperson of the Advisory Commission to participate virtually in—

(i) a meeting; and

(ii) all activities for that meeting.

(6) ELECTIONS.—Not less than ¾ of the members of the Advisory Commission must be present, virtually or in-person, for elections carried out under subsection (g).

(i) ADVISORY COMMISSION PERSONNEL MATTERS.—

(1) COMPENSATION OF MEMBERS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Members of the Advisory Commission shall serve without compensation.

(B) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—Members of the Advisory Commission shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, at rates authorized for an employee of an agency under subchapter 1 of chapter 57 of title 5, United States Code, while away from the home or regular place of business of the member in the performance of services for, or the duties of, the Commission.

(2) STAFF.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may provide the Advisory Commission with any staff or technical assistance that the Secretary, after consultation with the Advisory Commission, determines to be appropriate to enable the Advisory Commission to carry out its duties.

(B) DETAIL OF EMPLOYEES.—The Advisory Commission may accept the services of personnel detailed from a State or any political subdivision of a State.

(j) TERMINATION.—The Advisory Commission shall terminate on the date that is 10 years after the date of enactment of this Act.

The committee-reported amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to.

The bill (S. 2620), as amended, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

VICKSBURG NATIONAL MILITARY PARK BOUNDARY MODIFICATION ACT

The bill (S. 4994) to modify the boundary of the Vicksburg National Military Park in the State of Mississippi, and for other purposes, was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed as follows:

S. 4994

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

**SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

This Act may be cited as the “Vicksburg National Military Park Boundary Modification Act”.

**SEC. 2. VICKSBURG NATIONAL MILITARY PARK CONVEYANCE AND BOUNDARY MODIFICATION.**

(a) CONVEYANCE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Interior (referred to in this Act as the “Secretary”) shall convey to the State of Mississippi (referred to in this Act as the “State”) without consideration subject to any terms and conditions that the Secretary determines to be appropriate, the Federal land described in subsection (b).

(2) DESCRIPTION OF FEDERAL LAND.—The Federal land referred to in subsection (a) is the following:

(A) The parcel of approximately 3.66 acres of National Park Service land within the boundary of Vicksburg National Military Park, as depicted on the map entitled “VICK-2024-01”, to be used by the State as a welcome center or other public use.

(B) The approximately 6.48 acres of National Park Service land within the boundary of Vicksburg National Military Park, as depicted on the map entitled “VICK-2024-02”, to be used by the State an interpretive center or a museum or other public use.

(b) BOUNDARY MODIFICATION.—On conveyance of a parcel of Federal land under subsection (a), the Secretary shall modify the boundary of the Vicksburg National Military Park to reflect the conveyance of the parcel of Federal land.

Mr. WICKER. I thank my colleagues. I will yield for a moment to my friend from Maryland and then I may say a word after that.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The junior Senator from Maryland.

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Madam President, let me start by thanking my friend and colleague, the Senator from Mississippi, for working on these two pieces of important legislation. One which the Senator from Mississippi will talk about in a moment in greater depth is the Vicksburg National Military Park Boundary Modification Act. And coupled with that is the Chesapeake National Recreation Area Act, as amended, and unanimously passed by the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources just last month.

I introduced the Chesapeake National Recreation Area Act in July of 2023, after years of engagement with communities around the Chesapeake Bay and with the support of Senator CARDIN, Senator WARNER, Senator KAINE. And it has also been introduced in the House on a bipartisan basis by Congressman SARBANES and Congressman WITTMAN.

The idea for a Chesapeake National Recreation Area Act was born four decades ago. This has been a long time coming, and I am glad we arrived at this moment. It was motivated by a desire to formally recognize the Chesapeake Bay as the national treasure that it is and to provide all Americans with a greater opportunity to experience it.

The Chesapeake National Recreation Act would unite voluntarily contributed sites and iconic Chesapeake Bay properties under the operation of the National Park Service in what we call a string of pearls that will help to tie together key areas of the Bay.

The establishment of the Chesapeake National Recreation Area would improve public access to the Bay, allowing visitors to experience it firsthand, strengthening the culture of environmental stewardship, and providing visitors with an opportunity to learn about the region’s rich history and culture.

The National Chesapeake National Recreation Area would also create jobs and support economic growth throughout the region, promoting responsible tourism, and boosting the outdoor recreation and tourist economies.

This bipartisan initiative has been driven by local leaders since the beginning, and it was developed through exhaustive public outreach and meaningful collaboration with a broad range of stakeholders.

I want just, for a moment, to describe to my colleagues the outreach effort that brought us to this moment because it included the formation of a working group composed of a bicameral group of lawmakers, State government representatives, and more than 30 regional organizations to help develop the legislation.

It included a public comment period which we used to gather input and compile over 1,300 comments, which we integrated the feedback into the bill.

When we introduced the bill, it was accompanied by over 70 letters of support and 100 endorsements from local elected officials, environmental and historical preservation organizations, seafood and outdoor recreation businesses, and many more. We also worked closely with the National Park Service on technical assistance to guide the bill.

So it has been a great pleasure to work with Senator WICKER on his Vicksburg National Military Park Boundary Modification Act as we also work on this Chesapeake National Recreation Area Act. This is collaboration for the public good, for people in both of our States and people throughout the United States of America.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. CORTEZ MASTO). The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. WICKER. Reclaiming my time simply to say that I appreciate the cooperation of the Senator from Maryland, and I thank the Senate for giving unanimous consent to these two measures.

S. 4994, the Vicksburg National Military Park Modification Act, will modify—simply modify—the boundary of the Vicksburg National Park in my State of Mississippi. This transfer will convey a small parcel of Federal land to the State government and to the Friends of Vicksburg Military Park, an organization that will assist with restoration efforts at the park.

These efforts include a new, state-of-the-art, interactive center, which will guide tourists through the park and teach them the history and importance of Vicksburg, MS, during the Civil War. To execute these plans, the park will need to perform this land transfer.

The State will then be responsible for building and maintaining the connector road as well as the bridge to the new center, relieving the National Park Service from that burden.

So I am glad to see that our partners as well as Friends of Vicksburg are working together to establish a modern, interactive center that will tell the story of the siege and battle of Vicksburg for many generations to come.

I thank the Chair, I thank my colleague, and I thank the Senate for giving unanimous consent to these two measures.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Connecticut.

THE CALENDAR

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of the following bills, en bloc: Calendar No. 276, S. 1088; Calendar No. 297, S. 1059; Calendar No. 301, S. 432; Calendar No. 303, S. 608; Calendar No. 611, S. 4129; and Calendar No. 645, S. 5136.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bills, en bloc.

Mr. BLUMENTHAL. I ask unanimous consent that the committee-reported substitute amendment, where applicable, be agreed to; the Blumenthal substitute amendment to S. 5136, which is at the desk, be considered and agreed to; the bills as amended, if amended, be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motions to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table, en bloc.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The bills passed, en bloc, as follows:

NORTH DAKOTA TRUST LANDS COMPLETION ACT OF 2023

The bill (S. 1088) to authorize the relinquishment and in lieu selection of land and minerals in the State of North Dakota, to restore land and minerals to Indian Tribes within the State of North Dakota, and for other purposes, which had been reported from the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, with an amendment to strike all after the enacting clause and insert in lieu thereof the following: