

MODERNIZING ACCESS TO OUR PUBLIC OCEANS ACT

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (S. 759) to provide for the standardization, publication, and accessibility of data relating to public outdoor recreational use of Federal waterways, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

S. 759

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 “Modernizing Access to Our Public Oceans Act”.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) **EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE.**—The term “exclusive economic zone” has the meaning given that term in section 107 of title 46, United States Code.

(2) **FISHING RESTRICTION.**—The term “fishing restriction” means a restriction on fishing in a federally managed fishery established under section 303(b)(2) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1853(b)(2)), including—

(A) a full or partial fishing closure, in terms of both area and duration, or a seasonal closure;

(B) a no-catch zone in the fishery;

(C) a restriction on the method of catch for the fishery; and

(D) another restriction on fishing, as determined by the Secretary.

(3) **INDIAN TRIBE; TRIBAL ORGANIZATION.**—The terms “Indian Tribe” and “Tribal organization” have the meanings given those terms in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304).

(4) **NATIVE HAWAIIAN ORGANIZATION.**—The term “Native Hawaiian organization” has the meaning given the term in section 6207 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7517), except that the term includes the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands and the Office of Hawaiian Affairs of the State of Hawaii.

(5) **NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION.**—The term “nonprofit organization” means an organization that is described in section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and exempt from taxation under section 501(a) of such Code.

(6) **RECREATIONAL VESSEL.**—The term “recreational vessel” has the meaning given that term in section 2101 of title 46, United States Code.

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

SEC. 3. DATA STANDARDIZATION.

Not later than 31 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, including State and local governments, Indian Tribes, and Native Hawaiian organizations, shall develop and adopt standards with respect to the coordination and dissemination of geospatial data relating to fishing restrictions, use of the exclusive economic zone by recreational vessels, and access to Federal waters by such vessels, including such data made available under section 4.

SEC. 4. DATA PUBLICATION AND ACCESSIBILITY.

(a) **DATA ON FISHING AND RECREATIONAL VESSELS IN EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE.**—Not later than 4 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary, acting through the Director of the Office of Science

and Technology of the National Marine Fisheries Service, and to the maximum extent practicable, shall make available on a publicly accessible website geographic information system data that—

(1) includes, with respect to the exclusive economic zone—

(A) information with respect to the conditions under which fishing restrictions are imposed and the areas within the exclusive economic zone that are open or closed to recreational boating, diving, and related recreational activities (as determined by the Secretary), including for safety reasons such as because of the presence of harmful algal blooms;

(B) the areas of the exclusive economic zone with restrictions on the use of motorized propulsion, horsepower, or fuel by or of recreational vessels; and

(C) the types of recreational vessels that are restricted on each area of the exclusive economic zone;

(2) describes the geographic boundaries of areas where fishing restrictions occur; and

(3)(A) identifies Federal marine protected areas, including National Marine Sanctuaries, national marine monuments, and other federally protected waters; and

(B) includes information on what fishing, recreational boating, and other related recreational activities are authorized in each such area.

(b) **DATA ON NAVIGATION WITHIN EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary shall continue to make available digitized geographic information system data that includes, with respect to access to the exclusive economic zone—

(A) navigation information;

(B) bathymetric information;

(C) depth charts; and

(D) other information, consistent with law and policy.

(2) **WEBSITE.**—The Secretary shall, to the extent practicable, make the data described in paragraph (1) available on the website on which the Secretary makes the data described in subsection (a) available.

(c) **DATA ACCESSIBILITY.**—The Secretary shall ensure that the website on which the Secretary makes the data described in subsections (a) and (b) available—

(1) organizes that data so that the data is findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable; and

(2) includes a mechanism by which users can be easily updated when new data becomes available.

(d) **PUBLIC COMMENT.**—The Secretary shall develop—

(1) a process to allow members of the public to submit questions or comments regarding the data described in subsections (a) and (b) and the accessibility of that data under subsection (c); and

(2) methods to improve the accessibility of data.

(e) **UPDATES.**—The Secretary shall update—

(1) the data described in subsections (a)(1) and (b) not less frequently than 2 times each year; and

(2) the data described in paragraphs (2) and (3) of subsection (a) in real time.

(f) **NONDISCLOSURE OF CERTAIN INFORMATION.**—The Secretary may not, consistent with applicable law and policy, disclose, in any geographic information system data made publicly available under this section—

(1) information regarding the nature, location, character, or ownership of historic, paleontological, cultural, or archaeological resources; or

(2) commercial fishing information, including proprietary information.

(g) **TREATMENT OF TRIBAL WATERS AND FISHING AREAS.**—The authorities granted by

this section shall not apply with respect to any usual or accustomed fishing areas or Tribal waters.

SEC. 5. COOPERATION AND COORDINATION.

(a) **COMMUNITY PARTNERS AND THIRD-PARTY PROVIDERS.**—For purposes of carrying out this Act, the Secretary may—

(1) coordinate and partner with non-Federal entities, including—

(A) States;

(B) Indian Tribes, Native Hawaiian organizations, and Tribal organizations;

(C) interstate commissions (as defined in section 303 of the Interjurisdictional Fisheries Act of 1986 (16 U.S.C. 4102));

(D) Regional Ocean Partnerships (as defined in section 10202 of the James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023 (16 U.S.C. 1468));

(E) experts in data science, analytics, and operations research;

(F) the private sector, including technology or geospatial data industries;

(G) nonprofit organizations; and

(H) institutions of higher education (as defined in section 201 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001)); and

(2) enter into agreements with experts within entities described in any of subparagraphs (A) through (H) of paragraph (1) to carry out any of the provisions of this Act.

(b) **INTERAGENCY COORDINATION.**—The Secretary shall, to the maximum extent practicable, work with the relevant offices of the Department of the Interior, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Defense, the Department of Energy, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Coast Guard, the Army Corps of Engineers, and the Interagency Working Group on Ocean and Coastal Mapping codified by section 12203 of the Ocean and Coastal Mapping Integration Act (33 U.S.C. 3502), to ensure compatibility and interoperability among applicable Federal databases with respect to the collection and dissemination of geospatial data relating to public outdoor recreational use of the exclusive economic zone.

(c) **APPLICABILITY OF FEDERAL, STATE, AND TRIBAL LAW AND REGULATIONS.**—The Secretary, in developing and distributing geospatial data under this Act, shall make clear that the data are subject to applicable laws and regulations of the Federal Government, States, and Indian Tribes.

SEC. 6. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.

Nothing in this Act may be construed—

(1) to modify or alter the definition of the term “navigable waters” under any provision of Federal law;

(2) to affect the jurisdiction or authority of Federal or State agencies to regulate navigable waters;

(3) to increase or diminish the responsibility or authority of Federal or State agencies or Indian Tribes to manage fisheries under existing law;

(4) to satisfy any requirement for government-to-government consultation with Indian Tribes or Native Hawaiian organizations; or

(5) to affect or modify any treaty or other right of any Indian Tribe.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. HOYLE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members have 5 legislative days to revise

and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on S. 759, the bill now under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arkansas?

There was no objection.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 759, the Modernizing Access to Our Public Oceans Act, sponsored by Senator CRUZ from Texas.

This legislation would require NOAA to make certain data easily accessible to the multiple users of our ocean resources. Recreational and commercial industries operating on America's waterways need large amounts of data, including waterway closures, speed limits, and fishing restrictions.

Senator CRUZ' legislation directs NOAA to work with stakeholders and the public to determine what data to include, then publish it online in a user-friendly format.

I thank Representative FRY of South Carolina, the sponsor of companion legislation in the House of Representatives, for his leadership on this initiative that will enhance safety and improve the recreational experience for ocean users. I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. HOYLE of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, S. 759 would improve access to critical information for ocean users, including recreational boaters and fishers. This bill would direct the Secretary of Commerce to establish standards for NOAA for mapping recreational use of our oceans. This information would include fishing restrictions, vessel access, and navigation information. Area restrictions, such as within the national marine sanctuaries and marine national monuments, would be clearly marked on these maps.

The United States' exclusive economic zone covers about 3.4 million square nautical miles and supports 4.5 million recreational fishing vessels. About 11 million registered boats contribute roughly \$170 billion annually to the economy.

Currently, access to geospatial data for recreational use is across multiple databases. This lack of centralized data can make it difficult for millions of recreational boaters to understand the latest regulations and puts both boaters and coastal environments at risk.

S. 759 would improve access, transparency, and usability of critical information. By making regulations easier to understand and follow, this bill will help create safer, more enjoyable experiences on the water. This will strengthen coastal economies and improve environmental protection efforts.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, this bill is a commonsense step that improves public safety and access to our oceans. I thank Senator CRUZ and Representative FRY for their diligent work and attention on this issue.

I urge my colleagues to support the legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PATRONIS). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 759.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM INVASIVE SPECIES STRIKE TEAM ACT OF 2025

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 4219) to direct the Secretary of the Interior to establish the National Wildlife Refuge System Invasive Species Strike Team Program, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 4219

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 "National Wildlife Refuge System Invasive Species Strike Team Act of 2025".

SEC. 2. NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM INVASIVE SPECIES STRIKE TEAM PROGRAM.

(a) NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE SYSTEM INVASIVE SPECIES STRIKE TEAM PROGRAM.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall carry out a program to identify and respond to priority invasive species threats within or adjacent to National Wildlife Refuge System lands and waters in coordination with partners, to be known as the "National Wildlife Refuge System Invasive Species Strike Team Program".

(2) REQUIREMENTS.—In carrying out the Program, the Secretary shall—

(A) establish at least 1 invasive species strike team within each region of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service trained in early detection and rapid response for multiple invasive species taxa to—

(i) conserve, manage, and, where appropriate, restore, habitat conditions that help native biological communities flourish within or adjacent to National Wildlife Refuge System lands and waters;

(ii) conduct appropriate prevention, early detection, rapid response, and management of invasive species;

(iii) use integrated pest management techniques and tools;

(iv) conduct outreach and training, including trainings and table-top exercises, including on the use of the Incident Command System, as part of their planning and operations; and

(v) use risk assessments, research, innovations, management outcomes, monitoring, and evaluation to improve the effectiveness of detection and response activities;

(B) engage in partnerships and collaborations with—

(i) Federal, State, Tribal, and local governments;

(ii) nongovernmental institutions;

(iii) nonprofit organizations; and

(iv) private individuals and entities to advance mutual priorities and promote efficiency and cost-savings;

(C) collaborate in the development of a set of consistent taxonomy standards and work with others to implement such standards among each database of the Department of the Interior;

(D) utilize national and regional standardized reporting platforms, such as—

(i) the National Agricultural Pest Information System;

(ii) the National Data Repository of the National Plant Diagnostic Network;

(iii) the Early Detection and Distribution Mapping System;

(iv) the Nonindigenous Aquatic Species Database of the United States Geological Survey;

(v) iMapInvasives; and

(vi) State databases; and

(E) ensure that both identification and response to priority invasive species threats on lands and waters adjacent to the National Wildlife Refuge System are carried out only at the request of the owner of such lands or waters.

(3) PROVISION OF ASSISTANCE.—In carrying out the Program, the Secretary may—

(A) conduct outreach as appropriate to Federal, State, local, and Tribal governments and institutions, as well as private individuals and organizations, to address the management of invasive species within or adjacent to National Wildlife Refuge System lands and waters, including providing or entering into, upon request—

(i) financial assistance, including direct expenditures;

(ii) technical assistance;

(iii) contracts; or

(iv) grants or cooperative agreements; and

(B) upon the request of an entity described in subparagraph (A) and as appropriate, enter into an agreement to provide the expertise and use of an Invasive Species Strike Team established under paragraph (2) to respond to existing or newly detected invasive species.

(4) COORDINATION OF MANAGEMENT ACTIONS.—The Secretary shall encourage the National Wildlife Refuge System to coordinate the invasive species management actions of each Invasive Species Strike Team with adjacent landowners and the State or Tribal agencies within the State or Tribal lands on which Invasive Species Strike Team activities may occur.

(5) REPORT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Appropriations and the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate, and make available to the public on the website of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, a report regarding the Program 2 years after the date of the enactment of this section and 5 years after the date of the enactment of this section.

(B) CONTENTS OF REPORT.—Each report submitted under subparagraph (A) shall include—

(i) a summary of the work of each Invasive Species Strike Team to address priority invasive species within the National Wildlife Refuge System; and

(ii) progress made by the Program toward the prevention, detection, control, or eradication of each priority invasive species.