

Union Calendar No. 753

118TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. R. 6994

[Report No. 118–921, Part I]

To require the reopening of covered recreation sites closed due to a natural disaster, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 16, 2024

Mrs. KIM of California (for herself, Mr. LAMALFA, and Mr. TIFFANY) 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

DECEMBER 18, 2024

Additional sponsor: Mr. LAWLER

DECEMBER 18, 2024

Reported from the Committee on Natural Resources with an amendment

[Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in *italic*]

DECEMBER 18, 2024

Committee on Agriculture discharged; committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

[For text of introduced bill, see copy of bill as introduced on January 16, 2024]

A BILL

To require the reopening of covered recreation sites closed
due to a natural disaster, 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 “Restoring Our Unopened*
5 *Trails for Enjoyment and Safety Act” or the “ROUTES*
6 *Act”.*

7 **SEC. 2. REOPENING OF COVERED RECREATION SITES**
8 **CLOSED DUE TO NATURAL DISASTERS.**

9 *(a) REOPENING REQUIRED.—In the case of a covered*
10 *recreation site that is fully or partially closed due to per-*
11 *sonal injury or damage caused by a natural disaster, the*
12 *Secretary concerned shall—*

13 *(1) reopen such covered recreation site not later*
14 *than 3 years after the date on which such natural dis-*
15 *aster ends, as determined by the Secretary concerned;*
16 *and*

17 *(2) if the covered recreation site is not reopened*
18 *on or before the date described in paragraph (1), not*
19 *later than 30 days after such date and every 90 days*
20 *thereafter during which such site remains closed, sub-*
21 *mit to Congress a report identifying the barriers to*
22 *reopening such site.*

23 *(b) CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION FOR COVERED RECRE-*
24 *ATION SITE RESTORATION.—*

1 (1) *CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION ESTABLISHED.*—
2 *Activities described in paragraph (2) are a category*
3 *of actions hereby designated as being categorically ex-*
4 *cluded from the preparation of an environmental as-*
5 *essment or an environmental impact statement*
6 *under section 102 of the National Environmental Pol-*
7 *icy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332).*

8 (2) *ACTIVITIES DESIGNATED FOR CATEGORICAL*
9 *EXCLUSION.*—*The activities designated under this sec-*
10 *tion for a categorical exclusion are activities carried*
11 *out by the Secretary concerned on Interior rec-*
12 *reational lands or National Forest System lands*
13 *where the primary purpose of such activity is, con-*
14 *sistent with the land use plan applicable to such*
15 *lands, to—*

16 (A) *repair and restore covered recreation*
17 *sites damaged by a natural disaster;*

18 (B) *remove or mitigate hazard trees for the*
19 *purpose of public safety, protection of property,*
20 *or improving access to a covered recreation site;*

21 (C) *mitigate and reduce soil erosion im-*
22 *pacting a covered recreation site;*

23 (D) *restore drainage patterns to support a*
24 *covered recreation site; or*

1 (E) any combination of the purposes speci-
2 fied in subparagraphs (A) through (D).

3 (3) *AVAILABILITY OF CATEGORICAL EXCLU-*
4 *SION.—On and after the date of the enactment of this*
5 *Act, the Secretary concerned may use the categorical*
6 *exclusion established under paragraph (1) in accord-*
7 *ance with this subsection.*

8 (4) *EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES.—The ac-*
9 *tivities categorically excluded under paragraph (1)*
10 *shall be subject to the extraordinary circumstances*
11 *procedures established pursuant to section 1501.4 of*
12 *title 40, Code of Federal Regulations (or any suc-*
13 *cessor regulation).*

14 (c) *EMERGENCY HAZARD TREE REMOVAL.—*

15 (1) *NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM LANDS.—With re-*
16 *spect to the removal or mitigation of hazard trees lo-*
17 *cated on a parcel of National Forest System land,*
18 *during the 3-year period after a natural disaster on*
19 *such parcel ends, as determined by the Secretary of*
20 *Agriculture, section 220.4(b) of title 36, Code of Fed-*
21 *eral Regulations (as in effect on the date of the enact-*
22 *ment of this Act) shall have the force and effect of law*
23 *with respect to such parcel.*

24 (2) *INTERIOR RECREATIONAL LANDS.—With re-*
25 *spect to the removal and mitigation of hazard trees*

1 *located on Interior recreational lands, during the 3-*
2 *year period after a natural disaster on such parcel*
3 *ends, as determined by the Secretary of the Interior,*
4 *section 46.150 of title 43, Code of Federal Regulations*
5 *(as in effect on the date of the enactment of this Act)*
6 *shall have the force and effect of law with respect to*
7 *such parcel.*

8 *(d) REPORT.—Not later than 2 years after the date*
9 *of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary concerned shall*
10 *submit to Congress, and make publicly available on the*
11 *website of the Department of the Interior and the Depart-*
12 *ment of Agriculture, a report that includes the number of*
13 *covered recreation sites—*

14 *(1) that have been reopened pursuant to sub-*
15 *section (a)(1); and*

16 *(2) that, as of the date of such report, are closed*
17 *due to damage caused by a natural disaster and the*
18 *date such natural disaster ended, as determined by*
19 *the Secretary concerned.*

20 *(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:*

21 *(1) COVERED RECREATION SITE.—The term*
22 *“covered recreation site” means—*

23 *(A) a campground or developed day-use*
24 *recreation site that—*

1 (i) is operated by the Secretary con-
2 cerned; and

3 (ii) is located on Interior recreational
4 lands or National Forest System lands; or
5 (B) a road or trail that—

6 (i) is under the jurisdiction of the Sec-
7 retary concerned;

8 (ii) used to access or serve a camp-
9 ground or developed day-use recreation site
10 described in subparagraph (A); and

11 (iii) is located on Interior recreational
12 lands or National Forest System lands.

13 (2) *HAZARD TREE.*—The term “hazard tree”
14 means a standing tree that presents a visible hazard
15 to people or property due to conditions such as the de-
16 terioration of, or damage to—

17 (A) the root system, trunk, stem, or limbs of
18 the tree; or

19 (B) the direction or lean of the tree.

20 (3) *INTERIOR RECREATIONAL LANDS.*—The term
21 “Interior recreational lands” means lands managed
22 by the National Park Service, the United States Fish
23 and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Manage-
24 ment, or the Bureau of Reclamation.

1 (4) *NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM.*—*The term “Na-*
2 *tional Forest System” has the meaning given that*
3 *term in section 11(a) of the Forest and Rangeland*
4 *Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16*
5 *U.S.C. 1609(a)).*

6 (5) *NATURAL DISASTER.*—*The term “natural*
7 *disaster” includes a wildfire, flood, hurricane, wind-*
8 *storm, erosion, and tornado.*

9 (6) *SECRETARY CONCERNED.*—*The term “Sec-*
10 *retary concerned” means—*

11 (A) *the Secretary of the Interior, with re-*
12 *spect to Interior recreational lands; or*

13 (B) *the Secretary of Agriculture, with re-*
14 *spect to National Forest System lands.*

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