

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 7159

To bolster United States engagement with the Pacific Islands region, and
for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 31, 2024

Mr. CASE (for himself, Mr. BARR, Mrs. RADEWAGEN, Mrs. WAGNER, Mr. MOYLAN, Mr. SABLAN, Mr. WOMACK, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY, Ms. PORTER, Ms. TOKUDA, Ms. STRICKLAND, Mr. NORCROSS, Mr. BERA, Mr. DUNN of Florida, and Mr. MEEKS) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

A BILL

To bolster United States engagement with the Pacific Islands
region, 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 “Pacific Partnership
5 Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

7 It is the sense of Congress as follows:

8 (1) The United States has longstanding and en-
9 during cultural, historic, economic, strategic, and

1 people-to-people connections with the Pacific Islands,
2 based on shared values, cultural histories, common
3 interests, and a commitment to fostering mutual un-
4 derstanding and cooperation.

5 (2) Successive United States administrations
6 have recognized the critical importance of the Pacific
7 Islands, to the world in high-level strategic docu-
8 ments, including the—

9 (A) 2015 National Security Strategy,
10 which first declared the rebalance to Asia and
11 the Pacific, affirmed the United States as a Pa-
12 cific nation, and paved the way for subsequent
13 United States engagement with the Pacific Is-
14 lands;

15 (B) 2017 National Security Strategy,
16 which includes a commitment to “shore up
17 fragile partner states in the Pacific Islands re-
18 gion to reduce their vulnerability to economic
19 fluctuations and natural disasters”;

20 (C) 2019 Indo-Pacific Strategy Report,
21 which identified the Pacific Islands as “critical
22 to United States strategy because of our shared
23 values, interests, and commitments”;

24 (D) 2022 Indo-Pacific Strategy Report,
25 which recognized the need to engage further

1 with the Pacific Islands on shared security
2 goals; and

3 (E) 2022 Strategy for Pacific Partnership,
4 which outlined goals and methods for deepening
5 the United States partnerships with Pacific Is-
6 land nations.

7 (3) The United States Government should fur-
8 ther develop, expand, and support a comprehensive
9 and multifaceted United States policy for the Pacific
10 Islands that—

11 (A) promotes peace, security, and pros-
12 perity for all countries that respects the sov-
13 ereignty and political independence of all na-
14 tions;

15 (B) preserves the Pacific Ocean as a cor-
16 ridor for international maritime economic op-
17 portunities and growth and promotes sustain-
18 able development;

19 (C) supports regional efforts to address
20 shared challenges, including by strengthening
21 resilience to natural disasters and stewardship
22 of natural resources; and

23 (D) strengthens democratic governance
24 and the rule of law, and promotes human rights

1 and the preservation of the region’s cultural
2 heritages.

3 (4) The United States should support the vi-
4 sion, values, and objectives of existing regional mul-
5 tilateral institutions and frameworks, such as the
6 Pacific Islands Forum and the Pacific Community,
7 including—

8 (A) the 2000 Biketawa Declaration;

9 (B) the 2014 Framework for Pacific Re-
10 gionalism;

11 (C) the 2018 Boe Declaration on Regional
12 Security;

13 (D) the Boe Declaration Action Plan; and

14 (E) the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific
15 Continent.

16 (5) The United States should work closely with
17 United States allies and partners with existing rela-
18 tionships and interests in the Pacific Islands, such
19 as Australia, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand,
20 and Taiwan, and regional institutions like the Pa-
21 cific Islands Forum.

22 **SEC. 3. STRATEGY FOR PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP.**

23 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than January 1, 2026,
24 and every 4 years thereafter, the President, in coordina-
25 tion with the Secretary of State, shall develop and submit

1 to the appropriate congressional committees a strategy en-
2 titled the “Strategy for Pacific Partnership” (in this sec-
3 tion referred to as the “Strategy”).

4 (b) MATTERS TO BE INCLUDED.—The Strategy shall
5 include each of the following:

6 (1) A description of overarching goals for
7 United States engagement in the Pacific Islands re-
8 gion, including United States diplomatic posts, de-
9 fense posture, and economic engagement.

10 (2) An assessment of threats and pressures to
11 the Pacific Islands region including those caused by
12 factors such as—

13 (A) natural disasters;

14 (B) illegal, unreported, and unregulated
15 fishing;

16 (C) non-United States military presence
17 and activity;

18 (D) developmental challenges;

19 (E) economic coercion and corruption; and

20 (F) other factors assessed to be causing a
21 direct risk to the United States national inter-
22 ests in the Pacific Islands.

23 (3) A plan to address the threats assessed pur-
24 suant to paragraph (2).

1 (4) An analysis of the needs and goals ex-
2 pressed by governments of the Pacific Islands re-
3 gion, including at or through multilateral institu-
4 tions, evaluated in light of the United States na-
5 tional interests.

6 (5) A plan for the resources necessary for the
7 United States to meet its goals in the Pacific Islands
8 region.

9 (6) Mechanisms, including existing forums, for
10 coordinating and cooperating on shared goals among
11 the following, as appropriate:

12 (A) the governments of Pacific Island
13 countries;

14 (B) regional partners in the Pacific Islands
15 region, including multilateral forums and orga-
16 nizations, such as the Pacific Islands Forum;

17 (C) civil society in the Pacific Islands; and

18 (D) United States subnational govern-
19 ments in the Pacific.

20 (e) CONSULTATION.—In developing the Strategy, the
21 President should consult, as appropriate, with—

22 (1) relevant United States governmental agen-
23 cies;

24 (2) regional organizations, such as the Pacific
25 Islands Forum, the Pacific Islands Development

1 Program, the Pacific Community, the Forum Fish-
2 eries Agency, and the Secretariat of the Pacific Re-
3 gional Environment Programme;

4 (3) the governments of the countries in the Pa-
5 cific Islands;

6 (4) civil society stakeholders;

7 (5) United States allies and partners; and

8 (6) United States Pacific territories and States.

9 **SEC. 4. EXTENSION OF DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITIES TO THE**
10 **PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM.**

11 The provisions of the International Organizations Im-
12 munities Act (22 U.S.C. 288 et seq.) may be extended to
13 the Pacific Islands Forum in the same manner, to the
14 same extent, and subject to the same conditions as such
15 provisions may be extended to a public international orga-
16 nization in which the United States participates pursuant
17 to any treaty or under the authority of any Act of Con-
18 gress authorizing such participation or making an appro-
19 priation for such participation.

20 **SEC. 5. REPORTS ON IMPLEMENTATION.**

21 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the
22 date of submission of a strategy detailed in section 3(a),
23 the President shall submit to the appropriate congres-
24 sional committees an implementation report—

1 (1) with a proposed timeline for implementation
2 of the strategy described in section 3(a) of this Act;

3 (2) detailing the assessed number of full-time
4 equivalent positions and contractors needed to
5 achieve the goals laid out in the strategy described
6 in section 3(a) of this Act;

7 (3) describing any institutional or structural re-
8 organizations suggested to help carry out the strat-
9 egy described in section 3(a) of this Act; and

10 (4) if necessary, identifying additional funding
11 needed to support resource levels to carry out the
12 strategy described in 3(a).

13 (b) CONSOLIDATION.—A report required by this sub-
14 section may be consolidated with any other report required
15 to be submitted by the same Federal official on the same
16 or similar date as the requirement under this subsection.

17 **SEC. 6. ALLIES AND PARTNERS IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS**
18 **REGION.**

19 (a) IN GENERAL.—The President, in consultation
20 with the Secretary of State, and the relevant heads of
21 other Federal departments and agencies, should consult
22 and coordinate with allies and partners in the Pacific Is-
23 lands region, including Australia, Japan, New Zealand,
24 Taiwan, and regional institutions, such as the Pacific Is-
25 lands Forum, the Pacific Islands Development Program,

1 the Pacific Community and Secretariat for the Pacific Re-
2 gional Environment Programme, with respect to programs
3 to provide assistance to the Pacific Islands, including for
4 purposes of—

5 (1) deconflicting programming;

6 (2) ensuring that any programming does not
7 adversely affect the absorptive capacity of the Pa-
8 cific Islands;

9 (3) ensuring complementary programs benefit
10 the Pacific Islands to the maximum extent prac-
11 ticable; and

12 (4) ensuring that programming aligns with re-
13 gional development goals, as outlined by documents
14 such as the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Con-
15 tinent in order to support sustainable development
16 and promote a shared vision for the future of the
17 Pacific Islands.

18 (b) FORMAL CONSULTATIVE PROCESS.—The Presi-
19 dent should establish a formal consultative process with
20 such regional allies and partners to coordinate with re-
21 spect to such programs and future-years programming.

22 **SEC. 7. REPORTING.**

23 (a) UPDATES OF CERTAIN REPORTS.—The Secretary
24 of State, in coordination with the heads of other Federal
25 departments and agencies as appropriate, shall annually

1 update the reports listed in subsection (b) to include with-
2 in the scope of such reports a regional discussion of
3 transnational crime affecting the Pacific Islands.

4 (b) REPORTS LISTED.—The reports listed in this
5 subsection are the following:

6 (1) The International Narcotics Control Strat-
7 egy report required by section 489 of the Foreign
8 Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2291h).

9 (2) The Improving International Fisheries Man-
10 agement report required by section 607 of title VI
11 of the Fisheries Act of 1995 (16 U.S.C. 1826h).

12 (3) The Trafficking in Persons report sub-
13 mitted under section 110 of the Trafficking Victims
14 Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C. 7107).

15 **SEC. 8. DEFINITIONS.**

16 In this Act:

17 (1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMIT-
18 TEES.—The term “appropriate congressional com-
19 mittees” means—

20 (A) the Committee on Foreign Affairs of
21 the House of Representatives; and

22 (B) the Committee on Foreign Relations of
23 the Senate.

24 (2) PACIFIC ISLANDS; PACIFIC ISLANDS RE-
25 GION.—The term “Pacific Islands” and “Pacific Is-

1 lands region” mean the nations, territories, and
2 other jurisdictions in the Pacific Ocean within the
3 broad groupings of Melanesia, Micronesia, and Poly-
4 nesia.

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