

# Union Calendar No. 500

117<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
2<sup>D</sup> SESSION

# H. R. 7918

**[Report No. 117-683]**

To require the Secretary of Commerce to establish the Sea Turtle Rescue Assistance Grant Program.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 31, 2022

Mr. KEATING introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

DECEMBER 30, 2022

Additional sponsors: Ms. JAYAPAL, Mr. LYNCH, Ms. DELBENE, and Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN

DECEMBER 30, 2022

Reported with an amendment, committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, and ordered to be printed

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

[For text of introduced bill, see copy of bill as introduced on May 31, 2022]

# **A BILL**

To require the Secretary of Commerce to establish the Sea  
Turtle Rescue Assistance Grant Program.

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 “Sea Turtle Rescue As-*  
5 *sistance Act of 2022”.*

6 **SEC. 2. SEA TURTLE RESCUE ASSISTANCE GRANT PRO-**  
7 **GRAM.**

8       *(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall establish a*  
9 *grant program to be known as the “Sea Turtle Rescue As-*  
10 *sistance Grant Program”, to encourage and facilitate co-*  
11 *ordinated rapid response and rescue by awarding grants*  
12 *for the purposes described in subsection (c).*

13       *(b) DESIGNATION OF STRANDING REGIONS.—The Sec-*  
14 *retary shall designate geographic regions of the United*  
15 *States as stranding regions for the purposes of carrying out*  
16 *this section.*

17       *(c) PURPOSES.—The purposes of the Program are to*  
18 *provide for—*

19           *(1) the recovery, short- or long-term care, trans-*  
20 *portation, and treatment of stranded marine turtles;*

21           *(2) the release of rescued and recovered marine*  
22 *turtles;*

23           *(3) the collection of data and samples from*  
24 *stranded marine turtles for scientific research or as-*

1        *assessments regarding marine turtle health, including*  
2        *tagging information; and*

3            *(4) facility operation costs that are directly re-*  
4        *lated to activities described in paragraphs (1), (2),*  
5        *and (3).*

6        *(d) EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS.—The Sec-*  
7        *retary shall ensure, to the extent practicable, that funds*  
8        *awarded under this section are distributed equitably among*  
9        *stranding regions, taking into account—*

10            *(1) the number of stranding events that occurred*  
11        *in each stranding region in the preceding 5 years;*  
12        *and*

13            *(2) the conservation priorities and recovery needs*  
14        *of species of marine turtles that are threatened or en-*  
15        *dangered under the Endangered Species Act of 1973*  
16        *(16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.).*

17        *(e) APPLICATION.—An applicant for a grant under*  
18        *this section shall submit an application in such form and*  
19        *manner as the Secretary shall prescribe.*

20        *(f) GRANT CRITERIA.—*

21            *(1) DEVELOPMENT OF CRITERIA.—The Secretary*  
22        *shall, in consultation with the Director of the United*  
23        *States Fish and Wildlife Service, establish by regula-*  
24        *tion appropriate criteria for awarding grants under*  
25        *this section.*

1           (2) *STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT.*—As part of  
2           the process for developing and finalizing criteria  
3           under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall, in consulta-  
4           tion with the Director of the United States Fish and  
5           Wildlife Service, provide opportunities for engagement  
6           with representatives from stranding regions and rep-  
7           resentatives of public and private organizations with  
8           an established record in rescue, rehabilitation, and re-  
9           lease, as well as related scientific research, marine  
10          conservation, and forensic science, with respect to  
11          stranded marine turtles.

12          (3) *REQUIRED CRITERIA.*—The criteria devel-  
13          oped under paragraph (1) shall prioritize applicants  
14          with an established record of rescuing, rehabilitation,  
15          scientific research, and forensic science with respect to  
16          stranded marine turtles or conducting scientific re-  
17          search and forensic science on stranded marine tur-  
18          tles.

19          (g) *LIMITATIONS.*—

20                (1) *MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF GRANT.*—No grant  
21                awarded under this section may exceed \$150,000 in  
22                any 12-month period.

23                (2) *MATCHING REQUIREMENT.*—The non-Federal  
24                share of the costs of an activity conducted with a  
25                grant awarded under the Program shall be not less

1        *than 50 percent of such costs, including in-kind serv-*  
2        *ices and the use of property.*

3        *(h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are*  
4        *authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary to carry out*  
5        *this section \$5,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2023 through*  
6        *2028 to remain available until expended. Not more than*  
7        *3 percent shall be used for administrative expenses to carry*  
8        *out this Act.*

9        *(i) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:*

10            *(1) MARINE TURTLE.—The term “marine turtle”*  
11            *means any member of the family Cheloniidae or*  
12            *Dermochelyidae.*

13            *(2) PROGRAM.—The term “Program” means the*  
14            *Sea Turtle Rescue Assistance Grant Program estab-*  
15            *lished under subsection (a).*

16            *(3) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means*  
17            *the Secretary of Commerce.*

18            *(4) STRANDING.—The term “stranding” means*  
19            *an event in which—*

20                    *(A) a marine turtle is dead and is—*

21                            *(i) on a beach or shore of the United*  
22                            *States; or*

23                            *(ii) in waters under the jurisdiction of*  
24                            *the United States (including any navigable*  
25                            *waters); or*

- 1                   (B) a marine turtle is alive and is—
- 2                   (i) on a beach or shore of the United
- 3                   States and unable to return to the water;
- 4                   (ii) on a beach or shore of the United
- 5                   States and in need of medical attention; or
- 6                   (iii) in the waters under the jurisdic-
- 7                   tion of the United States (including any
- 8                   navigable waters), and in need of medical
- 9                   attention or other necessary intervention to
- 10                  aid its likelihood of survival.

11                  (5) *STRANDING REGION*.—The term “stranding

12                  region” means a geographic region designated by the

13                  Secretary under subsection (b).

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