

118TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# S. 4451

To require the Secretary of the Interior to enter into an agreement with the National Academy of Sciences to carry out a study on reservation systems for Federal land.

---

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 4, 2024

Mr. PADILLA introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

---

## A BILL

To require the Secretary of the Interior to enter into an agreement with the National Academy of Sciences to carry out a study on reservation systems for Federal land.

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 “Review and Evaluation  
5 of Strategies for Equal Reservations for Visitor Experi-  
6 ences Federal Land Act” or the “RESERVE Federal  
7 Land Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

2 In this Act:

3 (1) **BOOKING WINDOW.**—The term “booking  
4 window”, with respect to a reservation system,  
5 means the time period during which a reservation or  
6 lottery entry is available to the public.

7 (2) **FEDERAL LAND.**—The term “Federal land”  
8 means—

9 (A) public lands (as defined in section 103  
10 of the Federal Land Policy and Management  
11 Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1702));

12 (B) National Forest System land;

13 (C) units of the National Park System;

14 (D) units of the National Wildlife Refuge  
15 System;

16 (E) sites administered by the Bureau of  
17 Reclamation; and

18 (F) sites administered by the Corps of En-  
19 gineers.

20 (3) **RECREATION ACTIVITY.**—The term “recre-  
21 ation activity” includes camping, backpacking,  
22 climbing, fishing, hiking, driving, and other rec-  
23 reational opportunities.

24 (4) **RESERVATION SYSTEM.**—

25 (A) **IN GENERAL.**—The term “reservation  
26 system” means any platform or method used by

1 managers of Federal land to ration recreation  
2 activities.

3 (B) INCLUSIONS.—The term “reservation  
4 system” includes reservation, lottery, metering,  
5 pricing, merit-based, and other similar rationing  
6 methods via online, telephone, paper, in-person,  
7 or other methods.

8 (5) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means  
9 the Secretary of the Interior.

10 **SEC. 3. NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES STUDY OF RES-**  
11 **ERVATION SYSTEMS FOR RECREATION AC-**  
12 **TIVITIES ON FEDERAL LAND.**

13 (a) STUDY.—

14 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, in coordina-  
15 tion with the Secretary of Agriculture and the Sec-  
16 retary of the Army, acting through the Chief of En-  
17 gineers, shall, not later than 60 days after the date  
18 of enactment of this Act, enter into an agreement  
19 with the National Academy of Sciences to carry out  
20 a study of reservation systems for recreation activi-  
21 ties on Federal land.

22 (2) REQUIREMENTS.—In carrying out the study  
23 under paragraph (1), the National Academy of  
24 Sciences shall carry out the following:

1 (A) A comprehensive review of the history  
2 of reservation systems, such as recreation.gov,  
3 including a review of—

4 (i) the studies that led to the estab-  
5 lishment of the applicable reservation sys-  
6 tem;

7 (ii) the iterations of the applicable  
8 reservation system over time to meet the  
9 needs of the applicable Federal agency;  
10 and

11 (iii) any visitor feedback provided with  
12 respect to the applicable reservation sys-  
13 tem.

14 (B) Based on available data and existing  
15 research, answer the following questions:

16 (i) What are the benefits and chal-  
17 lenges of implementing reservation systems  
18 for visitor management and conservation  
19 goals for Federal land?

20 (ii) What data are available to under-  
21 stand demand for recreation on Federal  
22 land? How can the data be used to balance  
23 visitor management and conservation  
24 goals?

1 (iii) What information is available re-  
2 garding Federal land users and reservation  
3 system users? What information is avail-  
4 able or needs to be collected regarding de-  
5 mographics and characteristics of success-  
6 ful applicants using the reservation sys-  
7 tems?

8 (iv) What best practices should guide  
9 reservation system design, including diver-  
10 sity of rationing mechanisms and booking  
11 windows, and would promote equal access  
12 to recreation activities? What metrics can  
13 be used to record outcomes of reservation  
14 system design?

15 (v) How have fees been collected for  
16 reservation systems over time to meet the  
17 needs of the applicable Federal agency?  
18 How are the revenues from fees for res-  
19 ervation systems split between, and spent  
20 by, Federal land units, Federal agencies,  
21 and third-party contractors? How is the  
22 fee structure disseminated to users? How  
23 could dissemination of information with re-  
24 spect to the fee structure be improved?

1                   (vi) What are the odds of success with  
2                   respect to securing a reservation under res-  
3                   ervation systems? How are the odds of suc-  
4                   cess disseminated to users? How could dis-  
5                   semination of information with respect to  
6                   the odds of success be improved?

7                   (vii) How are data, including data col-  
8                   lected by contractors, on reservation sys-  
9                   tems shared with Federal land managers,  
10                  researchers, and the public? How can  
11                  transparency be improved to inform the  
12                  decisionmaking of users of reservation sys-  
13                  tems?

14           (b) REPORT.—The agreement entered into under  
15           subsection (a)(1) shall include a requirement that, not  
16           later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this  
17           Act, the National Academy of Sciences shall submit to the  
18           appropriate committees of Congress a report that de-  
19           scribes the results of the study carried out under sub-  
20           section (a)(1).

○