

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 5115

To support Tribal co-stewardship, restore and protect bison, grizzly bear, and wolf populations, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 19, 2024

Mr. BOOKER introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Environment and Public Works

A BILL

To support Tribal co-stewardship, restore and protect bison, grizzly bear, and wolf populations, 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 “Tribal Heritage and
5 American Bison, Grizzly Bear, and Wolf Restoration and
6 Coexistence Act”.

7 SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

8 Congress finds that—

9 (1) the American bison, the grizzly bear, and
10 the wolf—

1 (A) are iconic species that have important
2 cultural significance to Indigenous peoples of
3 North America;

4 (B) play critical roles in maintaining eco-
5 system health and resilience; and

6 (C) have been hunted to the point of eradi-
7 cation from large parts of the historical range
8 of those species throughout most of the conti-
9 nental United States;

10 (2) the reduction or elimination of bison, grizzly
11 bears, and wolves from the historical range of those
12 species compromises the ecological integrity of eco-
13 systems;

14 (3) the people of the United States support co-
15 existence approaches to manage bison, grizzly bears,
16 and wolves on the landscape as a public trust;

17 (4) many recovery efforts are restoring bison,
18 grizzly bears, and wolves to suitable habitat within
19 the historical range of those species in the conti-
20 nental United States, but more is needed to ensure
21 that those species regain a firm foothold with long
22 term protection against eradication efforts due to in-
23 tolerance and fragmentation of key habitat; and

24 (5) this Act builds on the success of the Act of
25 June 8, 1940 (54 Stat. 250, chapter 278; 16 U.S.C.

1 668 et seq.) (commonly known as the “Bald and
2 Golden Eagle Protection Act”), the Marine Mammal
3 Protection Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1361 et seq.),
4 and the National Bison Legacy Act (36 U.S.C. note
5 prec. 301; Public Law 114–152) by providing essen-
6 tial Federal protections for bison, grizzly bears, and
7 wolves.

8 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

9 In this Act:

- 10 (1) **BEST AVAILABLE SCIENCE.—**
- 11 (A) **IN GENERAL.**—The term “best avail-
12 able science” means scientific findings that—
- 13 (i) were reviewed by independent,
14 anonymous peers and published in a jour-
15 nal that—
- 16 (I) is indexed in Web of Science
17 (or a successor platform); and
- 18 (II) subscribes to the Committee
19 on Publication Ethics (or a successor
20 organization);
- 21 (ii) are reproducible; and
- 22 (iii) have not been rebutted by 2 or
23 more independent scientific teams whose
24 rebuttals are published in accordance with
25 clauses (i) and (ii).

(B) REPRODUCIBLE.—For purposes of subparagraph (A)(ii), the term “reproducible” means that the results are capable of being replicated and the data, methods, and results are shared transparently in the journal that published the scientific findings.

(C) REBUTTAL.—For purposes of subparagraph (A)(iii), the term “rebuttal” includes—

- 9 (i) re-analysis using more robust sta-
10 tistical design;
11 (ii) failed efforts at replication; and
12 (iii) demonstrations that the methods
13 are impossible to replicate.

(3) COMMITTEE.—The term “Committee” means a committee established under section 5(a).

18 (4) COVERED SPECIES.—The term “covered
19 species”, as applicable, means bison, grizzly bears,
20 and wolves.

(5) GRIZZLY BEAR.—The term "grizzly bear" means a member of the species *Ursus arctos horribilis*.

(6) HISTORICAL RANGE.—The term "historical range", with respect to a covered species, means the

1 range of a covered species, as determined by the
2 Committee using the best available scientific and
3 historical information.

4 (7) NONLETHAL MEASURE.—The term “non-
5 lethal measure” means an activity designed to mini-
6 mize attractants or scare away or deter a bison,
7 grizzly bear, or wolf without wounding, restraining,
8 or trapping the bison, grizzly bear, or wolf.

9 (8) PUBLIC LAND.—The term “public land”
10 means land managed by the Bureau of Land Man-
11 agement.

12 (9) SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY.—The term “scientific
13 society” means an organization—

14 (A) the mission of which is dedicated to 1
15 or more sciences;

16 (B) that is explicitly nonpartisan;

17 (C) the members of which are scientists;
18 and

19 (D) the officers and staff of which do not
20 engage in lobbying or other actions prohibited
21 to organizations described in section 501(c)(3)
22 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and ex-
23 empt from taxation under section 501(a) of
24 that Code.

(10) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Interior.

3 (11) TAKE.—

(B) EXCLUSION.—The term “take” does not include the use of nonlethal measures to protect agricultural interests or public safety.

11 (12) TRIBAL LAND.—The term “Tribal land”
12 means—

(B) land not located within the boundaries
of an Indian reservation, pueblo, or rancheria
title to which is held—

1 (iii) by a dependent Indian commu-
2 nity.

3 (13) WOLF.—The term “wolf” means a mem-
4 ber of the species *Canis lupus* or *Canis rufus*, or
5 their wild hybrids.

6 **SEC. 4. PROTECTION OF BISON, GRIZZLY BEARS, AND**
7 **WOLVES.**

8 (a) PROHIBITED ACTS.—Subject to subsection (b), it
9 is unlawful for any person—

10 (1) to take, possess, purchase, sell, or transport
11 a covered species, or any product or part thereof;

12 (2) to violate any condition of a permit issued
13 under section 6(a); or

14 (3) to violate any regulation issued by the Sec-
15 retary pursuant to this Act.

16 (b) EXCEPTIONS.—Subsection (a) shall not apply
17 to—

18 (1) captive-bred bison intended for human con-
19 sumption;

20 (2) a taking that is based on a good faith belief
21 that the taking is imminently necessary for self-de-
22 fense or to prevent serious injury or save the life of
23 a person in immediate danger, as determined by the
24 Secretary;

10 (c) CIVIL PENALTIES.—

11 (1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the requirements
12 of paragraph (2), any person who violates subsection
13 (a) may be assessed a civil penalty by the Secretary
14 of not more than \$25,000 for each violation.

19 (3) FAILURE TO PAY.—

20 (A) CIVIL ACTION AUTHORIZED.—

1 in which the person is found, resides, or
2 transacts business to collect the penalty.

3 (ii) JURISDICTION.—The district
4 court of the United States in which an ac-
5 tion is brought under clause (i) shall have
6 jurisdiction to hear and decide the action.

7 (B) DEFERENCE TO SECRETARY.—In any
8 action brought under subparagraph (A)(i), the
9 applicable district court of the United States
10 shall sustain the determination of the Secretary
11 to assess a penalty under paragraph (1) if that
12 determination is supported by substantial evi-
13 dence.

14 (d) CRIMINAL PENALTIES.—

15 (1) IN GENERAL.—

16 (A) FIRST VIOLATION.—Any person who
17 knowingly violates subsection (a) shall be fined
18 not more than \$50,000, imprisoned not more
19 than 1 year, or both.

20 (B) SUBSEQUENT VIOLATIONS.—In the
21 case of a second or subsequent violation of sub-
22 section (a), a person shall be fined not more
23 than \$75,000, imprisoned not more than 2
24 years, or both.

(C) SEPARATE OFFENSE.—Each violation of subsection (a) is a separate offense.

(2) PAYMENT OF FINE TO INFORMANTS.— $\frac{1}{2}$ of the amount of each fine assessed under subparagraph (A) or (B) of paragraph (1) shall be paid to any person that gives information leading to a conviction under this subsection.

8 (3) CLARIFICATION.—In a prosecution under
9 this subsection for a violation of subsection (a), the
10 Federal Government shall not be required to prove
11 that the violator knew that the animal taken was a
12 covered species.

13 (e) CANCELLATION OF GRAZING AUTHORIZA-
14 TIONS.—

15 (1) IN GENERAL.—Any lease, license, permit, or
16 agreement issued by the head of a Federal agency
17 to a person authorizing the grazing of domestic live-
18 stock on Federal land shall be cancelled on the con-
19 viction of the person in an action brought under sub-
20 section (d)(1).

1 (f) DONATION OF GRAZING PERMITS AND LEASES.—

2 (1) IN GENERAL.—Beginning in fiscal year
3 2025, the Secretary, with respect to public land, and
4 the Secretary of Agriculture, with respect to Na-
5 tional Forest System land (referred to in this sub-
6 section as the “Secretary concerned”), shall accept
7 the donation of any valid existing leases or permits
8 authorizing grazing on public land or National For-
9 est System land, as applicable, for the purpose of re-
10 ducing conflicts between permitted livestock and cov-
11 ered species.

12 (2) TERMINATION.—With respect to each per-
13 mit or lease donated under paragraph (1), the Sec-
14 retary concerned shall—

15 (A) terminate the grazing permit or lease;
16 and

17 (B) except as provided in paragraph (3),
18 ensure a permanent end to grazing on the pub-
19 lic land or National Forest System land, as ap-
20 plicable, covered by the permit or lease.

21 (3) COMMON ALLOTMENTS.—If land covered by
22 a permit or lease donated under paragraph (1) is
23 also covered by another valid grazing permit or lease
24 that is not donated under that paragraph, the Sec-
25 retary concerned shall not allow the total grazing

1 use on the land to exceed the average actual grazing
2 use under the other valid grazing permit or lease for
3 the 5-year period preceding the date on which the
4 permit or lease is donated under that paragraph.

5 **SEC. 5. ESTABLISHMENT OF BISON, GRIZZLY BEAR, AND**
6 **WOLF RESTORATION AND COEXISTENCE**
7 **COMMITTEES.**

8 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 90 days after
9 the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall es-
10 tablish 3 committees, 1 for each covered species, to carry
11 out the requirements of this Act.

12 (b) MEMBERSHIP.—Each Committee shall be com-
13 posed of members, to be appointed by the Secretary, in
14 accordance with the following:

15 (1) REGIONAL REPRESENTATION OF FEDER-
16 ALLY RECOGNIZED INDIAN TRIBES.—Each region of
17 each Committee, as described in subsection (c), shall
18 include 3 members of federally recognized Indian
19 Tribes, to be nominated by those federally recog-
20 nized Indian Tribes, based on criteria that gives
21 preference to individuals who would represent Tribal
22 land or a usual and accustomed area where a feder-
23 ally recognized Indian Tribe has treaty reserved
24 rights on Federal land that is—

25 (A) inhabited by a covered species;

(B) located within the historical range of
the covered species; or

3 (C) identified in the report required under
4 section 8(a)(1)(B) as suitable to support popu-
5 lations of the covered species.

6 (2) AT-LARGE MEMBERS.—Each Committee
7 shall include 8 at-large members, which shall be
8 composed of 1 scientific expert representative from
9 each of the following Federal and State agencies
10 (designated by the applicable agency):

(A) The United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

13 (B) The National Park Service.

14 (C) The Forest Service.

15 (D) The Animal and Plant Health Inspec-
16 tion Service of the Department of Agriculture.

17 (E) The Bureau of Land Management.

18 (F) The Bureau of Indian Affairs.

19 (G) The United States Geological Survey.

(H) A State wildlife agency with expertise in successful coexistence and restoration efforts for the covered species.

1 (A) established regional scientific expertise
2 from regions that are key historic habitats of
3 the covered species; and

4 (B) expertise in wildlife restoration and co-
5 existence efforts with respect to the covered
6 species.

7 (c) ESTABLISHMENT OF REGIONS.—The Secretary
8 shall establish 8 regions within each Committee, which
9 shall correspond to the following geographic regions of the
10 United States Fish and Wildlife Service:

- 11 (1) Pacific.
- 12 (2) Southwest.
- 13 (3) Midwest.
- 14 (4) Southeast.
- 15 (5) Northeast.
- 16 (6) Mountain-Prairie.
- 17 (7) Alaska.
- 18 (8) Pacific Southwest.

19 (d) DETERMINATIONS TO BE MADE ON BASIS OF
20 BEST AVAILABLE SCIENCE AND METHODOLOGY.—Deter-
21 minations made by a Committee pursuant to this Act shall
22 be solely based on the best available science and method-
23 ology.

24 (e) NO REPLACEMENT OF EXISTING ENTITIES.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—The establishment of a Com-
2 mittee shall not replace any existing Federal or
3 interagency committee, task force, or study team.

4 (2) LIMITATIONS.—The functions of a Com-
5 mittee—

6 (A) shall be limited to those provided by
7 this Act; and

8 (B) shall not replace, repeal, or subsume
9 any authority or function delegated to any other
10 Federal or interagency committee, task force, or
11 study team.

12 (f) IMPLEMENTATION OF DEPREDATION AND COEX-
13 ISTENCE GRANT PROGRAMS.—Notwithstanding any other
14 provision of law, each Committee shall—

15 (1) review applications for assistance under the
16 grant program established under subsection (b) of
17 section 102 of America's Conservation Enhancement
18 Act (7 U.S.C. 8355); and

19 (2) make award recommendations to the Secre-
20 taries (as defined in subsection (a) of that section)
21 with respect to those applications.

22 **SEC. 6. PERMITTED TAKING OF BISON, GRIZZLY BEARS
23 AND WOLVES.**

24 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may issue a permit
25 in accordance with this section authorizing the taking,

1 possession, or transportation of a covered species, or any
2 product or part thereof, that is otherwise prohibited by
3 section 4(a).

4 (b) CONDITIONS.—The Secretary may issue a permit
5 under subsection (a) only if the Secretary has—

6 (1) investigated the circumstances that gave
7 rise to the permit application; and
8 (2) determined that the taking, possession, or
9 transportation is an allowable taking, possession, or
10 transportation under subsection (c).

11 (c) ALLOWABLE TAKINGS, POSSESSIONS, OR TRANS-
12 PORTS.—Subject to subsection (d), for purposes of sub-
13 section (b)(2), an allowable taking, possession, or trans-
14 portation is any of the following:

15 (1) SCIENTIFIC OR CONSERVATION PUR-
16 POSES.—Taking, possessing, or transporting a cov-
17 ered species, or any product or part thereof, for sci-
18 entific purposes, to rehabilitate an injured animal, or
19 to enhance the propagation or survival of the cov-
20 ered species, by a—

21 (A) public museum;
22 (B) scientific society;
23 (C) wildlife sanctuary, preserve, or reha-
24 bilitation facility; or

1 (D) zoological park that is accredited by
2 the Association of Zoos and Aquariums.

3 (2) BISON POPULATION CONTROL.—

4 (A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subparagraph
5 (B), taking of bison to control over-
6 population in a specific geographic area, as de-
7 termined necessary by the Secretary.

8 (B) REQUIREMENTS.—Prior to making a
9 determination under subparagraph (A) with re-
10 spect to a taking of a bison, the Secretary shall
11 determine, in consultation with the applicable
12 Committee, that the bison cannot be relocated
13 to support efforts under section 8 to reintro-
14 duce bison on—

15 (i) Tribal land; or
16 (ii) usual and accustomed areas where
17 federally recognized Indian Tribes have
18 treaty reserved rights on Federal land.

19 (3) PROTECTION OF AGRICULTURAL INTERESTS
20 OR PUBLIC SAFETY.—

21 (A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subparagraph
22 (B), taking of a grizzly bear or wolf dur-
23 ing such time and in such location as the Sec-
24 retary determines to be essential to protect ag-

1 ricultural interests or public safety in the loca-
2 tion.

3 (B) REQUIREMENTS FOR TAKING.—Prior
4 to making a determination under subparagraph
5 (A) with respect to a taking—

6 (i) the Governor of the State in which
7 the taking will occur shall request, in writ-
8 ing, that the Secretary make the deter-
9 mination;

10 (ii) the Secretary shall conclude that
11 situationally appropriate nonlethal meas-
12 ures have been consistently used in the lo-
13 cation and proven ineffective to mitigate
14 the threat of the covered species to agricul-
15 tural interests or public safety; and

16 (iii) the Secretary shall determine, in
17 consultation with the applicable Com-
18 mittee, that, for any grizzly bear or wolf
19 which poses a threat to agricultural inter-
20 ests, the grizzly bear or wolf cannot be re-
21 located to support—

22 (I) efforts under section 8 to re-
23 introduce grizzly bears and wolves
24 on—

25 (aa) Tribal land; or

(bb) usual and accustomed areas where federally recognized Indian Tribes have treaty reserved rights on Federal land; or

(II) recovery efforts for the populations of the covered species listed as a threatened species or an endangered species under section 4 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1533).

(d) NO PERMITS FOR TAKINGS THAT WOULD EXCEED MORTALITY LIMIT.—The Secretary may not issue a permit under subsection (a) for an allowable use described in subsection (c)(1) if the taking of the covered species would cause the total mortality for any population or subpopulation of the covered species to exceed the scientifically recommended limit, as determined by the applicable Committee.

19 (e) NONALIENABILITY.—Any person issued a permit
20 under subsection (a) may not sell, transfer, assign, or oth-
21 erwise alienate the authority granted to the person by the
22 permit.

23 (f) CONDUCT REQUIREMENTS.—Taking, possessing,
24 or transporting a covered species, or any product or part
25 thereof, with a permit issued under subsection (a) shall

1 be conducted in a manner consistent with the conditions
2 of that permit.

3 (g) PERMITS ISSUED UNDER THE ESA.—A permit
4 issued under section 10(a) of the Endangered Species Act
5 of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1539(a)) for a covered species shall
6 be treated as a permit issued under subsection (a).

7 **SEC. 7. CONSULTATION WITH FEDERALLY RECOGNIZED IN-**
8 **DIAN TRIBES.**

9 (a) CONSULTATION REQUIRED BEFORE ISSUING
10 PERMIT.—Before issuing a permit under section 6(a) that
11 authorizes an activity to be carried out on the Tribal land
12 of a federally recognized Indian Tribe or on usual and ac-
13 customed areas where federally recognized Indian Tribes
14 have treaty reserved rights on Federal land, the Secretary
15 shall consult with the applicable federally recognized In-
16 dian Tribe.

17 (b) CONSULTATION REQUIRED BEFORE TAKING
18 MAJOR FEDERAL ACTION.—Before taking any major
19 Federal action that may negatively impact covered species
20 habitat or increase covered species mortality, a Federal
21 agency shall consult with—

- 22 (1) the applicable Committee; and
23 (2) any federally recognized Indian Tribe—
24 (A) the Tribal land of which may be im-
25 pacted by the Federal action; and

(B) that has usual and accustomed areas where the federally recognized Indian Tribe has treaty reserved rights on Federal land that may be impacted by the Federal action.

5 (c) REQUIREMENTS.—Any consultation conducted
6 with a federally recognized Indian Tribe under subsection
7 (b)(2) shall be—

11 (2) carried out through cooperative manage-
12 ment agreements between the Secretary, the Sec-
13 retary of Agriculture, and the federally recognized
14 Indian Tribe.

15 SEC. 8. RESTORATION OF BISON, GRIZZLY BEARS, OR
16 WOLVES.

17 (a) REINTRODUCTION OF BISON, GRIZZLY BEARS,
18 OR WOLVES ON TRIBAL LAND.—

19 (1) STUDY; REPORT.—

1 areas where the federally recognized Indian
2 Tribe has treaty reserved rights on Federal
3 land, shall conduct a study to identify Tribal
4 land and usual and accustomed areas where
5 federally recognized Indian Tribes have treaty
6 reserved rights on Federal land that is suitable
7 to support covered species populations.

8 (B) REPORT.—Not later than 2 years after
9 the date of enactment of this Act, each Com-
10 mittee shall make publicly available on the
11 website of the Department of the Interior a re-
12 port containing the results of the study con-
13 ducted under subparagraph (A).

14 (2) NOTIFICATIONS.—Not later than 30 days
15 after the date on which a report is made available
16 under subparagraph (B) of paragraph (1), the Sec-
17 retary shall notify—

18 (A) each federally recognized Indian Tribe
19 whose Tribal land was identified in the study
20 conducted under subparagraph (A) of that
21 paragraph that the federally recognized Indian
22 Tribe has land that is suitable to support cov-
23 ered species populations;

24 (B) each federally recognized Indian Tribe
25 with treaty reserved rights on usual and accus-

1 tomed areas on Federal land identified in the
2 study conducted under subparagraph (A) of
3 that paragraph that the land is suitable to sup-
4 port covered species populations; and

5 (C) the Governor of any State in which the
6 Tribal land described in subparagraph (A) or
7 usual and accustomed areas where federally rec-
8 ognized Indian Tribes have treaty reserved
9 rights on Federal land described in subpara-
10 graph (B) is located.

11 (3) REINTRODUCTION.—If a federally recog-
12 nized Indian Tribe notified under paragraph (2)(A)
13 notifies the Secretary that the federally recognized
14 Indian Tribe requests the reintroduction of a cov-
15 ered species on the land of the federally recognized
16 Indian Tribe, the Secretary shall coordinate with the
17 federally recognized Indian Tribe to reintroduce on
18 that land members of the species for which a take
19 permit has been issued by the Secretary pursuant to
20 paragraph (2) or (3) of section 6(c).

21 (4) MANNER OF REINTRODUCTION.—The re-
22 introduction of a covered species under paragraph
23 (3) on Tribal land shall be carried out by the Sec-
24 retary and the relevant federally recognized Indian
25 Tribe in a manner that is consistent with—

1 (A) the scientific advice of the applicable
2 Committee;

3 (B) the traditional ecological knowledge of
4 the federally recognized Indian Tribe; and

5 (C) Secretarial Order 3403, entitled “Joint
6 Secretarial Order on Fulfilling the Trust Re-
7 sponsibility to Indian Tribes in the Stewardship
8 of Federal Lands and Waters” and issued by
9 the Secretary on November 15, 2021.

10 (5) MANAGEMENT.—The relevant federally rec-
11 ognized Indian Tribes, in consultation with the Sec-
12 retary, shall manage covered species reintroduced on
13 Tribal land under this section using the best avail-
14 able science and consistent with the cultural impera-
15 tives of those federally recognized Indian Tribes, as
16 described in the documents entitled—

17 (A) “The Grizzly: A Treaty of Coopera-
18 tion, Cultural Revitalization and Restoration”
19 (commonly known as the “Grizzly Treaty”);

20 (B) “The Buffalo: A Treaty of Coopera-
21 tion, Renewal, and Restoration” (commonly
22 known as the “Buffalo Treaty”); and

23 (C) “The Wolf: A Treaty of Cultural and
24 Environmental Survival” (commonly known as
25 the “Wolf Treaty”).

1 (6) PROTECTION OF PUBLIC SAFETY.—A griz-
2 zly bear or wolf that has been identified by the Sec-
3 retary as a threat to public safety shall not be eligi-
4 ble for reintroduction under this section.

5 (b) OTHER RESTORATION EFFORTS.—Nothing in
6 this Act affects any effort by the Secretary to reintroduce
7 a covered species on land not described in this section.

8 **SEC. 9. LIMITATION ON USE OF LETHAL WILDLIFE CON-**
9 **TROL MEASURES.**

10 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary or the Secretary of
11 Agriculture shall prohibit on public land or National For-
12 est System land, as applicable, the use of any lethal wild-
13 life control measures if the applicable Committee deter-
14 mines that the use of those lethal measures on that land
15 may result in the taking of a covered species.

16 (b) PROHIBITION.—The Secretary and the Secretary
17 of Agriculture shall prohibit Federal agency staff and con-
18 tracted entities from using any lethal wildlife control
19 measures on any land where the applicable Committee de-
20 termines that the use of those lethal measures may result
21 in the taking of a covered species.

1 SEC. 10. SAVINGS PROVISION.

2 Nothing in this Act impedes the implementation of
3 the Bison Conservation and Transfer Program of the Na-
4 tional Park Service.

