118TH CONGRESS 1ST SESSION H.R. 2560

AUTHENTICATED

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To require the Secretary of Commerce to establish the Sea Turtle Rescue Assistance Grant Program, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

April 10, 2023

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

A BILL

To require the Secretary of Commerce to establish the Sea Turtle Rescue Assistance Grant Program, 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 "Sea Turtle Rescue As-5 sistance Act of 2023".

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

8 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall establish
9 a grant program, to be known as the "Sea Turtle Rescue
10 Assistance Grant Program", to encourage and facilitate

coordinated rapid response and rescue by awarding grants
 for the purposes described in subsection (c).

3 (b) DESIGNATION OF STRANDING REGIONS.—The
4 Secretary shall designate geographic regions of the United
5 States as stranding regions for the purposes of carrying
6 out this section.

7 (c) PURPOSES.—The purposes of the Program are to8 provide for—

9 (1) the recovery, short- or long-term care,
10 transportation, and treatment of stranded marine
11 turtles;

12 (2) the release of rescued and recovered marine13 turtles;

(3) the collection of data and samples from
stranded marine turtles for scientific research or assessments regarding marine turtle health, including
tagging information; and

18 (4) facility operation costs that are directly re19 lated to activities described in paragraphs (1), (2),
20 and (3).

(d) EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS.—The
Secretary shall ensure, to the extent practicable, that
funds awarded under this section are distributed equitably
among stranding regions, taking into account—

(1) the number of stranding events that oc curred in each stranding region in the preceding 5
 years; and

4 (2) the conservation priorities and recovery
5 needs of species of marine turtles that are threat6 ened or endangered under the Endangered Species
7 Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.).

8 (e) APPLICATION.—An applicant for a grant under 9 this section shall submit an application in such form and 10 manner as the Secretary shall prescribe.

11 (f) GRANT CRITERIA.—

12 (1) DEVELOPMENT OF CRITERIA.—The Sec13 retary shall, in consultation with the Director of the
14 United States Fish and Wildlife Service, establish by
15 regulation appropriate criteria for awarding grants
16 under this section.

17 (2) STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT.—As part of 18 the process for developing and finalizing criteria 19 under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall, in con-20 sultation with the Director of the United States Fish 21 and Wildlife Service, provide opportunities for en-22 gagement with representatives from stranding re-23 gions and representatives of public and private orga-24 nizations with an established record in rescue, reha-25 bilitation, and release, as well as related scientific re-

1	search, marine conservation, and forensic science,
2	with respect to stranded marine turtles.
3	(3) REQUIRED CRITERIA.—The criteria devel-
4	oped under paragraph (1) shall prioritize applicants
5	with an established record of rescuing, rehabilita-
6	tion, scientific research, and forensic science with re-
7	spect to stranded marine turtles or conducting sci-
8	entific research and forensic science on stranded ma-
9	rine turtles.
10	(g) LIMITATIONS.—
11	(1) MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF GRANT.—No grant
12	awarded under this section may exceed $$150,000$ in
13	any 12-month period.
14	(2) MATCHING REQUIREMENT.—The non-Fed-
15	eral share of the costs of an activity conducted with
16	a grant awarded under the Program shall be not less
17	than 50 percent of such costs, including in-kind
18	services and the use of property.
19	(h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
20	are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary to carry
21	out this section \$5,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2024
22	through 2029 to remain available until expended. Not
23	more than 3 percent shall be used for administrative ex-
24	penses to carry out this Act.
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25 (i) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

1	(1) MARINE TURTLE.—The term "marine tur-
2	tle" means any member of the family Cheloniidae or
3	Dermochelyidae.
4	(2) PROGRAM.—The term "Program" means
5	the Sea Turtle Rescue Assistance Grant Program
6	established under subsection (a).
7	(3) Secretary.—The term "Secretary" means
8	the Secretary of Commerce.
9	(4) STRANDING.—The term "stranding" means
10	an event in which—
11	(A) a marine turtle is dead and is—
12	(i) on a beach or shore of the United
13	States; or
14	(ii) in waters under the jurisdiction of
15	the United States (including any navigable
16	waters); or
17	(B) a marine turtle is alive and is—
18	(i) on a beach or shore of the United
19	States and unable to return to the water;
20	(ii) on a beach or shore of the United
21	States and in need of medical attention; or
22	(iii) in waters under the jurisdiction
23	of the United States (including any navi-
24	gable waters), and in need of medical at-

tention or other necessary intervention to 1 2 aid its likelihood of survival. (5) STRANDING REGION.—The term "stranding 3 region" means a geographic region designated by the 4 5 Secretary under subsection (b).

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