

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 6994

To require the reopening of covered recreation sites closed due to a natural disaster, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 16, 2024

Mrs. KIM of California (for herself, Mr. LAMALFA, and Mr. TIFFANY) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on Agriculture, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To require the reopening of covered recreation sites closed due to a natural disaster, 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 “Restoring Our Un-
5 opened Trails for Enjoyment and Safety Act” or the
6 “ROUTES Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. REOPENING OF COVERED RECREATION SITES**
2 **CLOSED DUE TO NATURAL DISASTERS.**

3 (a) REOPENING REQUIRED.—In the case of a covered
4 recreation site that is fully or partially closed due to dam-
5 age caused by a natural disaster (including hazard trees),
6 the Secretary concerned shall reopen such covered recre-
7 ation site not later than 2 years after the date on which
8 such natural disaster ends, as determined by the Secretary
9 concerned.

10 (b) CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION FOR COVERED RECRE-
11 ATION SITE RESTORATION.—

12 (1) CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION ESTABLISHED.—
13 Activities described in paragraph (2) are a category
14 of actions hereby designated as being categorically
15 excluded from the preparation of an environmental
16 assessment or an environmental impact statement
17 under section 102 of the National Environmental
18 Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332).

19 (2) ACTIVITIES DESIGNATED FOR CATEGORICAL
20 EXCLUSION.—The activities designated under this
21 section for a categorical exclusion are activities car-
22 ried out by the Secretary concerned on Interior rec-
23 reational lands or National Forest System lands
24 where the primary purpose of such activity is, con-
25 sistent with the management plan applicable to such
26 lands, to—

1 (A) repair and restore covered recreation
2 sites damaged by a natural disaster;

3 (B) remove hazard trees for the purpose of
4 public safety or improving access to a covered
5 recreation site;

6 (C) mitigate and reduce soil erosion im-
7 pacting a covered recreation site;

8 (D) restore drainage patterns to support a
9 covered recreation site; or

10 (E) any combination of the purposes speci-
11 fied in subparagraphs (A) through (D).

12 (3) AVAILABILITY OF CATEGORICAL EXCLU-
13 SION.—On and after the date of the enactment of
14 this Act, the Secretary concerned may use the cat-
15 egorical exclusion established under paragraph (1) in
16 accordance with this subsection.

17 (4) EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES.—The
18 activities categorically excluded under paragraph (1)
19 shall be subject to the extraordinary circumstances
20 procedures established pursuant to section 1501.4 of
21 title 40, Code of Federal Regulations (or any suc-
22 cessor regulation).

23 (c) EMERGENCY HAZARD TREE REMOVAL.—

24 (1) NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM LANDS.—With
25 respect to hazard trees located on a parcel of Na-

1 tional Forest System lands, during the 2-year period
2 after a natural disaster on such parcel ends, as de-
3 termined by the Secretary of Agriculture, section
4 220.4(b) of title 36, Code of Federal Regulations (as
5 in effect on the date of the enactment of this Act)
6 shall have the force and effect of law with respect
7 to such parcel.

8 (2) INTERIOR RECREATIONAL LANDS.—With re-
9 spect to hazard trees located on Interior recreational
10 lands, during the 2-year period after a natural dis-
11 aster on such parcel ends, as determined by the Sec-
12 retary of the Interior, section 46.150 of title 43,
13 Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect on the
14 date of the enactment of this Act) shall have the
15 force and effect of law with respect to such parcel.

16 (d) REPORT.—Not later than 2 years after the date
17 of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary concerned shall
18 submit to Congress, and make publicly available on the
19 website of the Department of the Interior and the Depart-
20 ment of Agriculture, a report that includes the number
21 of covered recreation sites—

22 (1) that have been reopened pursuant to sub-
23 section (a); and

24 (2) that, as of the date of such report, are
25 closed due to damage caused by a natural disaster

1 and the date such natural disaster ended, as deter-
2 mined by the Secretary concerned.

3 (e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

4 (1) COVERED RECREATION SITE.—The term
5 “covered recreation site” means a trail, campground,
6 developed day-use recreation site, or road that is—

7 (A) located on Interior recreational lands
8 or National Forest System lands; and

9 (B) operated by the Secretary concerned.

10 (2) HAZARD TREE.—The term “hazard tree”
11 means a standing tree that presents a visible hazard
12 to people or property due to conditions such as the
13 deterioration of, or damage to—

14 (A) the root system, trunk, stem, or limbs
15 of the tree; or

16 (B) the direction or lean of the tree.

17 (3) INTERIOR RECREATIONAL LANDS.—The
18 term “Interior recreational lands” means lands man-
19 aged by the National Park Service, the United
20 States Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of
21 Land Management, or the Bureau of Reclamation.

22 (4) NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM.—The term
23 “National Forest System” has the meaning given
24 that term in section 11(a) of the Forest and Range-

1 land Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16
2 U.S.C. 1609(a)).

3 (5) NATURAL DISASTER.—The term “natural
4 disaster” includes a wildfire, flood, erosion, and tor-
5 nado.

6 (6) SECRETARY CONCERNED.—The term “Sec-
7 retary concerned” means—

8 (A) the Secretary of the Interior, with re-
9 spect to Interior recreational lands; or

10 (B) the Secretary of Agriculture, with re-
11 spect to National Forest System lands.

○