

Subcommittee on Federal Lands
Tom McClintock, Chairman
Hearing Memorandum

June 21, 2016

To: All Subcommittee on Federal Lands Members

From: Majority Staff – Terry Camp
Subcommittee on Federal Lands, (x6-7736)

Hearing: Legislative hearing on H.R. 2167 (Rep. Raúl Grijalva), To amend the Public Lands Corps Act of 1993 to expand the authority of the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of Commerce, and the Secretary of the Interior to provide service opportunities for young Americans, to help restore natural, cultural, historic, archaeological, recreational, and scenic resources of the United States, to train a new generation of public land managers and enthusiasts, to promote the value of public service, and for other purposes.
June 23, 2016 at 2:00 PM; 1324 Longworth HOB

H.R. 2167 (Rep. Raúl Grijalva), “Public Lands Service Corps Act of 2015”

Bill Summary

H.R. 2167, introduced by Ranking Member Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ), expands the Public Lands Service Corps (PLC) program to the Department of Commerce and requires the creation of a department-level office within the Department of the Interior, U.S. Forest Service, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration for the coordination of Corps activities. The bill also establishes an Indian Youth Corps program to carry out projects on Indian lands.

Cosponsors:

Rep. Niki Tsongas [D-MA-3], Rep. Matt Cartwright [D-PA-17], Rep. Peter DeFazio [D-OR-4], Rep. Sam Farr [D-CA-20], Rep. Jared Huffman [D-CA-2], Rep. Ann Kirkpatrick, Rep. Alan Lowenthal [D-CA-47], Rep. Seth Moulton [D-MA-6], Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton [D-DC], Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard [D-CA-40], Rep. John Sarbanes [D-MD-3], Rep. Mark Takai [D-HI-1], Rep. Mike Thompson [D-CA-5], Rep. Peter Welch [D-VT].

Invited Witnesses

PANEL I

The Honorable Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ-03)
Member of Congress

PANEL II

Mr. Michael Reynolds

Associate Director, Workforce and Inclusion
National Park Service
Washington, D.C.

Mr. Kevin Heiner

Regional Director
Southwest Conservation Corps
Durango, Colorado

Ms. Mary Ellen Sprenkel

President and CEO
The Corps Network
Washington, D.C.

Background

The Public Land Corps (PLC) work and education program employs thousands of young people, ages 16 to 25 in conservation oriented jobs on public lands. Congress established the PLC in 1993 (P.L. 103-82) to carry out a wide range of projects on public lands, including “any project for the conservation, restoration, construction or rehabilitation of natural cultural, historic, archaeological, recreational, or scenic resources” on public, Indian, or Hawaiian home lands.¹ Although land management agencies under the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture were eligible to participate in the PLC program, by the mid-2000s, only the National Park Service used the PLC program to support projects. NPS used its fee revenue retention authority for backlog maintenance work to finance projects under the PLC program. Other agencies supported the PLC program in concept, but contended that they did not have sufficient financial resources to support PLC projects.²

In 2005, Congress passed the Public Lands Corps Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2005 (P.L. 109-154), which amended the 1993 Act to encourage use of the PLC by other federal land management agencies and to prioritize projects that furthered the purposes of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (P.L. 108-148; 16 U.S.C. 6501 et seq.). Among other things, the Act authorized appropriations of up to \$12 million per year for authorized projects (\$8 million for projects that further one or more of the purposes of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6501 et seq.), and \$4 million to carry out other appropriate conservation projects). H.R. 2167 removes this funding formula on use of appropriated funds for authorized projects.

H.R. 2167, introduced by Ranking Member Grijalva, significantly expands the PLC program and changes the corps’ name to the Public Lands Service Corps. The bill expands the PLC program by establishing the Corps in the Department of Commerce (as well as in the

¹ P.L. 103-82; <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-107/pdf/STATUTE-107-Pg785.pdf>

² Senate Report 109-152

Department of Agriculture and the Department of the Interior, as under current law). The bill also requires creation of a department-level office at the Department of the Interior, U.S. Forest Service, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for the purpose of coordinating the PLC program. With the inclusion of NOAA, PLC participants could work in the National Marine Sanctuary System, coral reefs, and other coastal, estuarine, and marine habitats, and other lands and facilities administered by NOAA.

The legislation also establishes an Indian Youth Corps program to carry out projects on Indian lands. Additionally, H.R. 2167 authorizes the Secretaries to: (1) establish residential conservation centers; (2) provide temporary housing for the Corps and residential conservation centers; (3) recruit mentors for PLC participants; and (4) provide noncompetitive hiring status for up to two years for former Corps participants that served a minimum of 960 hours on an appropriate natural or cultural resources conservation project that included at least 120 hours through the Corps or the Indian Youth Service Corps.

Previous versions of this legislation were introduced in the House and the Senate in the 111th, 112th, and 113th Congress. Senator Tom Udall (D-NM) introduced a companion bill as S. 1160 in the 114th Congress.

Administration Position

The Administration position is unknown at this time; however, the Administration has supported similar versions of this legislation that were introduced in previous Congresses.

Cost

A Congressional Budget Office cost estimate has not yet been completed for this bill.

Ramseyer

http://naturalresources.house.gov/UploadedFiles/HR_2167_Ramseyer.pdf