

Union Calendar No.

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2560

[Report No. 118-]

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

NOVEMBER --, 2023

Reported with an amendment, committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, and ordered to be printed

[Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in italic]

[For text of introduced bill, see copy of bill as introduced on April 10, 2023]

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 and Rehabilitation Act of 2023”.*

6 **SEC. 2. SEA TURTLE RESCUE ASSISTANCE AND REHABILI-**
7 **TATION GRANT PROGRAM.**

8 (a) *ESTABLISHMENT.*—*The Secretary shall establish a*
9 *grant program, to be known as the “Sea Turtle Rescue As-*
10 *sistance and Rehabilitation Grant Program”, to encourage*
11 *and facilitate coordinated rapid response and rescue by*
12 *awarding grants for the purposes described in subsection*
13 *(c).*

14 (b) *DESIGNATION OF STRANDING AND REHABILITA-*
15 *TION REGIONS.*—*The Secretary shall designate geographic*
16 *regions of the United States as stranding and rehabilitation*
17 *regions for the purposes of carrying out this section.*

18 (c) *PURPOSES.*—*The purposes of the Program are to*
19 *provide for—*

20 (1) *the recovery, short- or long-term care, trans-*
21 *portation, and treatment of stranded marine turtles;*

22 (2) *the release of rescued and recovered marine*
23 *turtles;*

1 (3) *the collection of data and samples from*
2 *stranded marine turtles for scientific research related*
3 *to marine turtle health; and*

4 (4) *facility operation costs that are directly re-*
5 *lated to activities described in paragraphs (1), (2),*
6 *and (3).*

7 (d) *EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS.—The Sec-*
8 *retary shall ensure, to the extent practicable, that funds*
9 *awarded under this section are distributed equitably among*
10 *stranding and rehabilitation regions, taking into account—*

11 (1) *the number of stranding and rehabilitation*
12 *events that occurred in each stranding and rehabilita-*
13 *tion region in the preceding 5 years; and*

14 (2) *the conservation priorities and recovery needs*
15 *of species of marine turtles that are threatened or en-*
16 *dangered under the Endangered Species Act of 1973*
17 *(16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.).*

18 (e) *APPLICATION.—An applicant for a grant under*
19 *this section shall submit an application in such form and*
20 *manner as the Secretary shall prescribe.*

21 (f) *GRANT CRITERIA.—*

22 (1) *DEVELOPMENT OF CRITERIA.—The Secretary*
23 *shall, in consultation with the Director of the United*
24 *States Fish and Wildlife Service, establish by regula-*

1 *tion appropriate criteria for awarding grants under*
2 *this section.*

3 (2) *STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT.*—*As part of*
4 *the process for developing and finalizing criteria*
5 *under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall, in consulta-*
6 *tion with the Director of the United States Fish and*
7 *Wildlife Service, provide opportunities for engagement*
8 *with representatives from stranding and rehabilita-*
9 *tion regions and representatives of State governments*
10 *and public and private organizations with an estab-*
11 *lished record in coordination, rescue, rehabilitation,*
12 *and release, as well as related scientific research, ma-*
13 *rine conservation, and forensic science, with respect to*
14 *stranded marine turtles.*

15 (3) *REQUIRED CRITERIA.*—*The criteria devel-*
16 *oped under paragraph (1) shall prioritize applicants*
17 *with an established record of coordination, rescuing,*
18 *rehabilitation, scientific research, and forensic science*
19 *with respect to stranded and rehabilitated marine*
20 *turtles or conducting scientific research and forensic*
21 *science on stranded and rehabilitated marine turtles.*

22 (g) *LIMITATIONS.*—

23 (1) *MAXIMUM AMOUNT OF GRANT.*—*No grant*
24 *awarded under this section may exceed \$150,000 in*
25 *any 12-month period.*

1 (2) *MATCHING REQUIREMENT.*—*The non-Federal*
2 *share of the costs of an activity conducted with a*
3 *grant awarded under the Program shall be not less*
4 *than 50 percent of such costs, including in-kind serv-*
5 *ices and the use of property.*

6 (h) *DEFINITIONS.*—*In this section:*

7 (1) *MARINE TURTLE.*—*The term “marine turtle”*
8 *means any member of the family Cheloniidae or*
9 *Dermochelyidae.*

10 (2) *PROGRAM.*—*The term “Program” means the*
11 *Sea Turtle Rescue Assistance and Rehabilitation*
12 *Grant Program established under subsection (a).*

13 (3) *SECRETARY.*—*The term “Secretary” means*
14 *the Secretary of Commerce.*

15 (4) *STRANDING.*—*The term “stranding” means*
16 *an event in which—*

17 (A) *a marine turtle is dead and is—*

18 (i) *on a beach or shore of the United*
19 *States; or*

20 (ii) *in waters under the jurisdiction of*
21 *the United States (including any navigable*
22 *waters); or*

23 (B) *a marine turtle is alive and is—*

24 (i) *on a beach or shore of the United*
25 *States and unable to return to the water;*

1 (ii) on a beach or shore of the United
2 States and in need of medical attention; or
3 (iii) in waters under the jurisdiction of
4 the United States (including any navigable
5 waters), and in need of medical attention or
6 other necessary intervention to aid its likeli-
7 hood of survival.

8 (5) *STRANDING AND REHABILITATION REGION.*—
9 The term “stranding and rehabilitation region”
10 means a geographic region designated by the Sec-
11 retary under subsection (b).