H. R. 7486

To promote environmental literacy.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

April 7, 2022

Mr. SARBANES (for himself, Ms. NORTON, Mr. CICILLINE, Mr. LANGEVIN, Mr. PERLMUTTER, Mr. CONNOLLY, and Mr. SIRES) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and Labor

A BILL

To promote environmental literacy.

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 "No Child Left Inside
5	Act of 2022".
6	SEC. 2. FINDINGS.
7	Congress finds the following:
8	(1) Hands-on experiences in nature help build
9	stronger, smarter, and happier children.
10	(2) Children and young adults are increasingly

disconnected from the natural world around them,

- spending less time outside playing, exploring, and
 learning.
 - (3) Quality education for students includes regular opportunities to make connections outside of the classroom.
 - (4) Environmental education, when integrated across the curriculum, has positive impacts on the development of important skills, such as critical thinking, problem solving, and citizenship and leadership skills.
 - (5) Every student should have the opportunity to participate in residential outdoor education programs or comparable outdoor education programs.
 - (6) Outdoor and environmental education programs have been shown to build critical thinking skills and leadership skills, and can improve student attendance and retention rates.
 - (7) Colleges, universities, and higher education associations play a critical role in cultivating the next generation of scientists, engineers, educators, planners, and business leaders for 21st century careers in the public and private sectors.
 - (8) Environmental education, as part of the formal prekindergarten through grade 12 school curriculum, has positive impacts on student achieve-

- ment in all subjects, and especially in science, reading, mathematics, and social studies, and improves critical thinking skills, enthusiasm for learning, stewardship, and healthy lifestyles.
 - (9) The Partnership for 21st Century Learning identified environmental literacy as one of the key interdisciplinary themes critical to helping students to acquire the skills, knowledge, and expertise necessary to succeed in work and life.
 - (10) The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) rankings find that the United States is falling behind other nations in preparing students with the educational tools necessary to compete for the growing opportunities in the sciences, including careers related to the environment, natural resources, and energy.
 - (11) Forty-six States have developed, or are in the process of developing, environmental literacy plans to effectively integrate environmental education into the prekindergarten through grade 12 curriculum and to ensure that students graduate from high school environmentally literate.
 - (12) Support from the Department of Education is needed to help State and local educational agencies, and the partners of such agencies, imple-

1	ment environmental literacy plans and advance State
2	curriculum frameworks for environmental and nat-
3	ural resource education that meets new State aca-
4	demic content and student achievement standards.
5	(13) Federal science agencies, natural resource
6	agencies, and other agencies have important re-
7	sources, including Federal lands and laboratories,
8	content experts, data, and programs, that can in-
9	form and support State and local environmental lit-
10	eracy policies and programming.
11	SEC. 3. ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY.
12	Title IV (20 U.S.C. 7101 et seq.) of the Elementary
13	and Secondary Education Act of 1965 is amended by add-
14	ing at the end the following:
15	"PART G—ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY
16	"SEC. 4701. DEFINITIONS.
17	"In this part:
18	"(1) Eligible partnership.—The term 'eligi-
19	ble partnership' means a partnership that includes a
20	local educational agency and not less than 1 of the
21	following partners:
22	"(A) A Federal, State, regional, or local
23	environmental or natural resource management
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	agency, or parks and recreation department,

1	and experience in the field of environmental lit-
2	eracy, including the professional development of
3	teachers.
4	"(B) A nonprofit organization that has
5	demonstrated effectiveness, expertise, and expe-
6	rience in the field of environmental literacy, in-
7	cluding the professional development of teach-
8	ers, such as—
9	"(i) museums, as defined in section
10	273 of the Museum and Library Services
11	Act (20 U.S.C. 9172);
12	"(ii) a teacher preparation program at
13	an institution of higher education;
14	"(iii) the environmental or life
15	sciences department of an institution of
16	higher education;
17	"(iv) another local educational agency,
18	a public charter school, a public elemen-
19	tary school or secondary school, or a con-
20	sortium of such schools;
21	"(v) nature centers; or
22	"(vi) organizations with environmental
23	education programming.
24	"(2) Environmental Literacy.—The term
25	'environmental literacy' means—

1	"(A) a fundamental understanding of eco-
2	logical principles, the systems of the natural
3	world, the relationships and interactions be-
4	tween natural and man-made environments
5	and the skills to apply such understanding in
6	real-world settings; and
7	"(B) having the ability, both individually
8	and together with others, to make informed de-
9	cisions concerning the environment, having the
10	will to act on those decisions to improve the
11	well-being of other individuals, societies, and
12	the global environment, and participating in
13	civic life.
14	"(3) Environmental Literacy Plan.—The
15	term 'environmental literacy plan' means a plan de-
16	veloped, approved, or sponsored by a State edu-
17	cational agency in consultation with State environ-
18	mental agencies, State environmental education as-

"(A) prepares students to understand ecological principles, the systems of the natural world, and the relationships and interactions between natural and man-made environments,

sociations, and State natural resource agencies, and

with input from the public, that—

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1	and to apply such knowledge in real-world set-
2	tings;
3	"(B) provides field and hands-on experi-
4	ences as part of the regular school curriculum
5	and creates programs that contribute to healthy
6	lifestyles through outdoor recreation and sound
7	nutrition;
8	"(C) provides environmental service learn-
9	ing opportunities;
10	"(D) provides targeted professional devel-
11	opment opportunities for teachers that im-
12	prove—
13	"(i) environmental and natural re-
14	source content knowledge of teachers;
15	"(ii) pedagogical skills in teaching
16	about the environment, including the use
17	of—
18	"(I) interdisciplinary, field-based,
19	and research-based learning; and
20	"(II) science, technology, engi-
21	neering, and mathematics content
22	knowledge and tools; and
23	"(iii) the ability and confidence to use
24	school buildings and grounds as a context
25	for learning;

1	"(E) describes the measures the State will
2	use to assess the environmental literacy of stu-
3	dents, including—
4	"(i) relevant State academic content
5	standards and content areas regarding en-
6	vironmental education, and courses or sub-
7	jects where environmental education in-
8	struction will be integrated throughout the
9	prekindergarten through grade 12 cur-
10	riculum; and
11	"(ii) a description of the relationship
12	of the plan to the secondary school gradua-
13	tion requirements of the State;
14	"(F) describes the outdoor learning spaces
15	the State makes available to local educational
16	agencies;
17	"(G) describes how the State educational
18	agency will implement the plan, in partnership
19	with nongovernmental organizations, Federal
20	agencies, State environmental agencies, State
21	environmental education associations, State
22	natural resource agencies, and local educational
23	agencies, including how the State educational
24	agency will secure funding and other necessary
25	support;

1	"(H) is periodically updated by the State
2	educational agency not less often than every 5
3	years;
4	"(I) utilizes school building and grounds as
5	a context for learning;
6	"(J) describes teacher professional develop-
7	ment needs; and
8	"(K) develops and describes a plan to
9	adopt best management practices for early
10	childhood environmental education, including
11	guidelines for time in outdoors, outdoor space
12	design, and learning context.
13	"(4) High-need local educational agen-
14	CY.—The term 'high-need local educational agency'
15	means a local educational agency—
16	"(A) with respect to which not less than
17	20 percent of the children served by the agency
18	are children from low-income families;
19	"(B) that serves not fewer than 10,000
20	children from low-income families;
21	"(C) that meets the eligibility requirements
22	for funding under section 5211(b); or
23	"(D) that meets the eligibility require-
24	ments for funding under section 5221(b).

1	"(5) High-need school.—The term 'high-
2	need school' means a public elementary school or
3	secondary school that is located in an area in which
4	the percentage of students from families with in-
5	comes below the poverty line is 30 percent or more.
6	"(6) Outdoor school education pro-
7	GRAM.—The term 'outdoor school education pro-
8	gram' means a multi-day educational program that
9	delivers outdoor hands-on learning experiences, and
10	that—
11	"(A) addresses community needs and con-
12	texts;
13	"(B) takes place in a residential or day
14	program setting;
15	"(C) provides field study opportunities for
16	students;
17	"(D) is integrated with local school cur-
18	ricula and support students in meeting State
19	standards; and
20	"(E) provides students with opportunities
21	to develop leadership, critical thinking, and
22	problem solving skills.

1	"SEC. 4702. GRANTS FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF ENVIRON-
2	MENTAL LITERACY PLANS.
3	"(a) Program Authorized.—From amounts ap-
4	propriated to carry out this section, the Secretary shall
5	award grants to States to enable the States to award sub-
6	grants, on a competitive basis, to eligible partnerships to
7	support the implementation of the State environmental lit-
8	eracy plan.
9	"(b) Application.—
10	"(1) In general.—A State that desires a
11	grant under this section shall submit an application
12	to the Secretary, at such time, in such manner, and
13	containing such information as the Secretary may
14	require.
15	"(2) Contents.—Each application under this
16	subsection shall—
17	"(A) include the State's environmental lit-
18	eracy plan and information on the status of im-
19	plementation of such plan;
20	"(B) describe how funds received under
21	this section will assist the State in furthering
22	the implementation of the State's environmental
23	literacy plan;
24	"(C) describe the process the State will use
25	to make subgrants to eligible partnerships, and

1	"(D) describe the process the State will
2	use to evaluate the impact of the activities as-
3	sisted under this section.
4	"(c) Peer Review.—The Secretary shall—
5	"(1) establish a peer review process to assist in
6	the review of grant applications under this section;
7	"(2) appoint individuals to the peer review
8	process who—
9	"(A) are representative of parents, teach-
10	ers, State educational agencies, State environ-
11	mental agencies, State natural resource agen-
12	cies, local educational agencies, and nongovern-
13	mental organizations; and
14	"(B) are familiar with national environ-
15	mental issues and the health and educational
16	needs of students; and
17	"(3) include, in the peer review process, appro-
18	priate representatives from the Department of Com-
19	merce, the Department of the Interior, the Depart-
20	ment of Energy, the Environmental Protection
21	Agency, and other appropriate Federal agencies, to
22	provide environmental expertise and background for
23	evaluation of the State environmental literacy plan.

1	"(d) Administrative Expenses.—A State receiv-
2	ing a grant under this section may use not more than 2.5
3	percent of the grant funds for administrative expenses.
4	"(e) STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY REPORT.—
5	"(1) In General.—Each State receiving a
6	grant under this section shall prepare and submit an
7	annual report to the Secretary containing informa-
8	tion about—
9	"(A) the implementation of the environ-
10	mental literacy plan; and
11	"(B) the grant activities supported under
12	this section.
13	"(2) Report requirements.—The report re-
14	quired by this section shall be—
15	"(A) in the form specified by the Sec-
16	retary;
17	"(B) based on the State's ongoing evalua-
18	tion activities; and
19	"(C) made readily available to the public.
20	"(f) Subgrants Authorized.—
21	"(1) Subgrants to eligible partner-
22	SHIPS.—From amounts made available to a State
23	educational agency under subsection (a), the State
24	educational agency shall award subgrants, on a com-
25	petitive basis, to eligible partnerships serving the

- 1 State, to enable the eligible partnerships to carry out 2 the authorized activities described in subsection (h).
 - "(2) DURATION.—The State educational agency shall award each subgrant under this section for a period of not more than 3 years.
 - "(3) Priority.—In making subgrants under this section, a State shall give priority to eligible partnerships that include a high-need local educational agency.
 - "(4) Supplement, not supplement.—Funds provided to an eligible partnership under this section shall be used to supplement, and not supplant, funds that would otherwise be used for activities authorized under this section.

"(g) Application Requirements.—

- "(1) IN GENERAL.—Each eligible partnership desiring a subgrant under this section shall submit an application to the State educational agency, at such time, in such manner, and accompanied by such information as the State educational agency may require.
- "(2) Contents.—Each application submitted under paragraph (1) shall include—

1	"(A) a description of teacher professional
2	development needs with respect to the teaching
3	and learning of environmental content;
4	"(B) a description of how the eligible part-
5	nership will utilize school facilities and grounds
6	as tools for teaching and learning of environ-
7	mental content;
8	"(C) an explanation of how the activities to
9	be carried out by the eligible partnership are
10	expected to improve student academic achieve-
11	ment and strengthen the quality of environ-
12	mental instruction;
13	"(D) a description of how the activities to
14	be carried out by the eligible partnership—
15	"(i) will be aligned with challenging
16	State academic content standards and stu-
17	dent academic achievement standards
18	under section 1111(b)(1) in environmental
19	education, to the extent such standards
20	exist, and with the State's environmental
21	literacy plan; and
22	"(ii) will advance the teaching of
23	interdisciplinary courses that integrate the
24	study of natural, social, and economic sys-
25	tems, and that include strong field compo-

1	nents in which students have the oppor-
2	tunity to directly experience nature
3	through outdoor environmental learning;
4	"(E) a description of how the activities to
5	be carried out by the eligible partnership will
6	ensure that teachers are trained in the use of
7	field-based or service learning to enable the
8	teachers—
9	"(i) to use the local environment and
10	community as a resource; and
11	"(ii) to improve student under-
12	standing of the environment and increase
13	academic achievement;
14	"(F) a description of—
15	"(i) how the eligible partnership will
16	carry out the authorized activities de-
17	scribed in subsection (h); and
18	"(ii) the eligible partnership's evalua-
19	tion and accountability plan described in
20	subsection (i); and
21	"(G) a description of how the eligible part-
22	nership will continue the activities funded under
23	this section after the grant period has expired.
24	"(h) AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES.—An eligible partner-
25	ship shall use the subgrant funds provided under this sec-

1	tion for 1 or more of the following activities related to
2	elementary schools or secondary schools:
3	"(1) Providing targeted, job-embedded profes-
4	sional development opportunities for teachers that
5	improve the teachers' environmental content knowl-
6	edge and pedagogical skills in teaching about the en-
7	vironment, including in the use of—
8	"(A) interdisciplinary, research-based, and
9	field-based learning; and
10	"(B) technology in the classroom.
11	"(2) Establishing and operating environmental
12	education summer workshops or institutes, including
13	follow-up professional development for elementary
14	and secondary school teachers, and preschool teach-
15	ers, as appropriate, to improve pedagogical skills
16	and content knowledge for the teaching of environ-
17	mental education.
18	"(3) Developing or redesigning more rigorous
19	environmental education curricula that—
20	"(A) are aligned with challenging State
21	academic content standards in environmental
22	education, to the extent such standards exist,
23	and with the State environmental literacy plan;
24	and

- 1 "(B) advance the teaching of interdiscipli-2 nary courses that integrate the study of nat-3 ural, social, and economic systems and that in-4 clude strong field components.
 - "(4) Designing programs to prepare teachers at a school to provide mentoring and professional development to other teachers at such school to improve teacher environmental education content knowledge and pedagogical skills.
 - "(5) Establishing and operating programs to bring teachers and students into contact with working professionals in environmental fields to deepen such teachers' knowledge of environmental content and research practices.
 - "(6) Creating initiatives that seek to incorporate environmental education within teacher training programs or accreditation standards, consistent with the State environmental literacy plan.
 - "(7) Promoting the integration of outdoor environmental education lessons into the regular school curriculum and schedule in order to further the knowledge and professional development of teachers and help students directly experience nature.
- 24 "(8) Creating or improving outdoor learning25 spaces on school grounds.

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- "(i) EVALUATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN.— 1 "(1) IN GENERAL.—Each eligible partnership 2 3 receiving a subgrant under this section shall develop 4 an evaluation and accountability plan for activities 5 assisted under this section that includes rigorous ob-6 jectives that measure the impact of such activities. "(2) CONTENTS.—The plan developed under 7 8 paragraph (1) shall include measurable objectives to 9 increase the number of teachers who participate in 10 environmental education content-based professional 11 development activities. "(j) Report by Eligible Partnerships.—Each 12 eligible partnership receiving a subgrant under this section 13 shall report annually, for each year of the subgrant, to 14 15 the State educational agency regarding the eligible partnership's progress in meeting the objectives described in 16 17 the accountability plan of the eligible partnership under 18 subsection (i).
- "(k) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
 are authorized to be appropriated \$150,000,000 to carry
 out this section for fiscal year 2023 and each of the 4
 succeeding fiscal years.

1	"SEC. 4703. OUTDOOR SCHOOL EDUCATION PILOT PRO-
2	GRAM.
3	"(a) Grants Authorized.—From funds appro-
4	priated to carry out this section, the Secretary shall make
5	grants to eligible partnerships to establish or expand out-
6	door school education programs.
7	"(b) Application.—
8	"(1) IN GENERAL.—An eligible partnership that
9	desires a grant under this section shall submit an
10	application to the Secretary, at such time, in such
11	manner, and containing such information as the Sec-
12	retary may require.
13	"(2) Contents.—Each application under this
14	subsection shall describe the outdoor school edu-
15	cation program to be carried out and how such pro-
16	gram will—
17	"(A) improve student academic achieve-
18	ment as defined in the State plan under section
19	1111(c);
20	"(B) promote the development of leader-
21	ship skills;
22	"(C) increase student engagement in edu-
23	cation;
24	"(D) improve critical thinking skills;
25	"(E) provide opportunities for civic en-
26	gagement and service learning;

1	"(F) address inequities of outdoor edu-
2	cational opportunities for underserved children
3	in the State; and
4	"(G) improve student access to, and suc-
5	cess in, well-rounded educational experiences.
6	"(c) Priority.—The Secretary shall give priority to
7	applicants that propose to serve high-need schools.
8	"(d) Geographic Diversity.—In making awards
9	under this section, the Secretary shall ensure that grants
10	are awarded to eligible partnerships serving urban, rural,
11	and suburban local educational agencies.
12	"(e) REQUIRED USES OF FUNDS.—Eligible partner-
13	ships awarded grants under this section shall use such
14	funds for outdoor school education programs that—
15	"(1) provide a residential, hands-on educational
16	experience, or an equivalent combination of class-
17	room-based and outdoor educational experience, that
18	reflects local community needs and contexts, fea-
19	turing field study opportunities for students, which
20	may include learning about—
21	"(A) soil, water, plants, and animals;
22	"(B) the role of natural resources indus-
23	tries, including timber, agriculture, fisheries,
24	and others, in the economy of the State:

1	"(C) the interrelationship of nature, nat-
2	ural resources, economic development, and ca-
3	reer opportunities in the State; and
4	"(D) the importance of the State's envi-
5	ronmental and natural resources;
6	"(2) are integrated with local school curricula
7	in a manner that assists students in meeting State
8	standards related to science, technology, engineering,
9	and mathematics, and international standards re-
10	lated to science;
11	"(3) provide students with opportunities to de-
12	velop leadership, critical thinking, and decision-
13	making skills;
14	"(4) provide students with opportunities to
15	learn about the interdependence of urban and rural
16	areas; and
17	"(5) provide professional development for edu-
18	cators to effectively implement outdoor school edu-
19	cation programs.
20	"(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
21	are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be
22	necessary to carry out this section for fiscal year 2023
23	and each of the 4 succeeding fiscal years

"SEC. 4704. REPORT TO CONGRESS.

- 2 "Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment
- 3 of the No Child Left Inside Act of 2022 and every 2 years
- 4 thereafter, the Secretary shall submit a report to Congress
- 5 that—
- 6 "(1) describes the programs assisted under this
- 7 part;
- 8 "(2) documents the success of such programs in
- 9 improving national and State environmental edu-
- 10 cation capacity; and
- 11 "(3) makes such recommendations as the Sec-
- 12 retary determines appropriate for the continuation
- and improvement of the programs assisted under
- this part.".

15 SEC. 4. CONFORMING AMENDMENT.

- The table of contents in section 2 is amended by in-
- 17 serting after the item relating to section 4644 the fol-
- 18 lowing:

"PART G—ENVIRONMENTAL LITERACY

- "Sec. 4701. Definitions.
- "Sec. 4702. Grants for implementation of environmental literacy plans.
- "Sec. 4703. Outdoor school education pilot program.
- "Sec. 4704. Report to Congress.".

19 SEC. 5. AVAILABILITY OF OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL LIT-

- 20 ERACY INFORMATION.
- 21 (a) Other Federal Agency Environmental Lit-
- 22 ERACY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS.—The Secretary of Edu-
- 23 cation shall request that all Federal agencies provide in-

- 1 formation on any environmental literacy assistance pro-
- 2 gram operated, sponsored, or supported by such Federal
- 3 agency, including information about the application proce-
- 4 dures, financial terms and conditions, and other relevant
- 5 information for each program, and each Federal agency
- 6 shall promptly respond to surveys or other requests from
- 7 the Secretary of Education for the information described
- 8 in this subsection.
- 9 (b) Public Information.—The Secretary of Edu-
- 10 cation shall ensure that not later than 90 days after the
- 11 Secretary of Education receives the information required
- 12 under subsection (a), the eligibility requirements, applica-
- 13 tion procedures, financial terms and conditions, and other
- 14 relevant information for each environmental literacy as-
- 15 sistance program offered by another Federal agency are
- 16 searchable and accessible through the Department of Edu-
- 17 cation's website and cross-referenced with the United
- 18 States Green Ribbon School application information, in a
- 19 manner that is simple and understandable for local edu-
- 20 cational agencies and communities.
- 21 SEC. 6. FEDERAL INTERAGENCY COORDINATION ON ENVI-
- 22 RONMENTAL LITERACY.
- 23 (a) In General.—The Secretary of Education shall
- 24 coordinate environmental literacy activities between the
- 25 Department of Education, the Department of Agriculture,

- the Department of Energy, the Environmental Protection
- Agency, the Department of the Interior, and the Depart-
- ment of Commerce, the Department of Health and
- 4 Human Services, the National Science Foundation, the In-
- stitute of Museum and Library Services, and the National
- 6 Aeronautics and Space Administration, including by car-
- rying out the activities described in subsection (b).
- 8 (b) Coordination Activities.—In coordinating en-
- vironmental literacy activities, the Secretary of Education
- 10 shall—

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- 11 (1) assess Federal environmental education pro-12 grams, goals, and budget items across agencies;
- 13 assess environment-based science, tech-14 nology, engineering, and mathematics achievement 15 to demonstrate that learning about and in the envi-16 ronment is an effective strategy for increasing en-17 gagement in learning and academic achievement in 18 science, technology, engineering, and mathematics 19
 - (3) produce adaptable environmental literacy plan guidelines and identify coordinated resources across Federal agencies that States and local educational agencies can follow as States and local educational agencies work to develop environmental literacy plans and programs of their own.

subject areas; and

- 1 (c) Advisory Panel.—The Secretary of Education
- 2 shall appoint an advisory panel of stakeholders, including
- 3 representatives from State educational agencies, local edu-
- 4 cational agencies, businesses, and nonprofit organizations
- 5 that are engaged in local environmental literacy efforts
- 6 representing the geographic, economic, and cultural diver-
- 7 sity of the United States, who shall meet quarterly to ad-
- 8 vise and support interagency planning and assessment re-
- 9 garding environmental literacy activities.
- 10 (d) Report to Congress.—Not later than 1 year
- 11 after the date of enactment of this Act, and annually
- 12 thereafter, the Secretary of Education, the Administrator
- 13 of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Secretary of
- 14 the Interior, and the Secretary of Commerce shall prepare
- 15 and submit a joint report to Congress containing informa-
- 16 tion about the coordination of environmental literacy ac-
- 17 tivities between Federal agencies.

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