

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 7918

To require the Secretary of Commerce to establish the Sea Turtle Rescue Assistance Grant Program.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 31, 2022

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.

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 2022”.

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

1 Assistance Grant Program”, to award grants for the pur-
2 poses 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 to
8 provide for—

9 (1) the recovery, care, or treatment of stranded
10 marine turtles;

11 (2) the collection of data and samples from
12 stranded marine turtles for scientific research or as-
13 sessments regarding marine turtle health; and

14 (3) facility operation costs that are directly re-
15 lated to activities described in paragraphs (1) and
16 (2).

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

21 (1) the number of stranding events that oc-
22 curred in each stranding region in the preceding
23 year;

24 (2) the average number of stranding events per
25 stranding region per year;

1 (3) the size of marine turtle populations in each
2 stranding region; and

3 (4) the conservation and recovery of species of
4 marine turtles that are threatened or endangered
5 under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16
6 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.).

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

10 (f) GRANT CRITERIA.—

11 (1) DEVELOPMENT OF CRITERIA.—The Sec-
12 retary shall, in consultation with a representative
13 from each stranding region and representatives of
14 public and private organizations that are actively in-
15 volved in rescue, rehabilitation, release, scientific re-
16 search, marine conservation, and forensic science
17 with respect to stranded marine turtles, develop cri-
18 teria for awarding grants under this section.

19 (2) REQUIRED CRITERIA.—The criteria devel-
20 oped under paragraph (1) shall prioritize applicants
21 with an established record of rescuing or rehabili-
22 tating stranded marine turtles.

23 (g) LIMITATIONS.—

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

4 (2) MATCHING REQUIREMENT.—The non-Fed-
5 eral share of the costs of an activity conducted with
6 a grant awarded under the Program shall be not less
7 than 25 percent of such costs, including in-kind
8 services and the use of property.

9 (h) ADMINISTRATIVE COST.—The Secretary may not
10 expend to administer the Program in a fiscal year an
11 amount greater than—

12 (1) 6 percent of the amount awarded in grants
13 under this section in such fiscal year; or

14 (2) \$80,000.

15 (i) TRANSPARENCY.—The Secretary shall publish
16 each grant proposal and approved grant under this sec-
17 tion.

18 (j) RECEIVE GIFTS.—Notwithstanding section 3113
19 of title 31, United States Code, the Secretary may accept
20 gifts in cash or in-kind to be used to carry out the pur-
21 poses of this section.

22 (k) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
23 are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary to carry
24 out this section \$5,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2023
25 through 2028 to remain available until expended.

1 (l) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

2 (1) MARINE TURTLE.—The term “marine tur-
3 tle” means any member of the family Cheloniidae or
4 Dermochelyidae.

5 (2) PROGRAM.—The term “Program” means
6 the Sea Turtle Rescue Assistance Grant Program
7 established under subsection (a).

8 (3) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
9 the Secretary of Commerce.

10 (4) STRANDING.—The term “stranding” means
11 an event in the wild in which—

12 (A) a marine turtle is dead and is—

13 (i) on a beach or shore of the United
14 States; or

15 (ii) in waters under the jurisdiction of
16 the United States (including any navigable
17 waters); or

18 (B) a marine turtle is alive and is—

19 (i) on a beach or shore of the United
20 States and unable to return to the water;

21 (ii) on a beach or shore of the United
22 States and in need of medical attention; or

23 (iii) in the waters under the jurisdic-
24 tion of the United States (including any
25 navigable waters), but is unable to return

1 to its natural habitat under its own power
2 or without assistance.

3 (5) STRANDING REGION.—The term “stranding
4 region” means a geographic region designated by the
5 Secretary under subsection (b).

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