

117TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. R. 9115

To amend title 54, United States Code, to authorize the provision of technical assistance under the Preserve America Program and to direct the Secretary of the Interior to enter into partnerships with communities adjacent to units of the National Park System to leverage local cultural heritage tourism assets.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 30, 2022

Mrs. PELTOLA introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

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## A BILL

To amend title 54, United States Code, to authorize the provision of technical assistance under the Preserve America Program and to direct the Secretary of the Interior to enter into partnerships with communities adjacent to units of the National Park System to leverage local cultural heritage tourism assets.

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 “Explore America Act  
5       of 2022”.

1 **SEC. 2. PURPOSES.**

2 The purposes of this Act are—

3 (1) to strengthen economic development across  
4 the United States by supporting cultural heritage  
5 tourism and historic preservation activities through  
6 the Preserve America Program; and

7 (2) to encourage the Director of the National  
8 Park Service to partner with gateway communities  
9 (including Native American communities and Na-  
10 tional Heritage Areas) to leverage local cultural and  
11 historic heritage tourism assets.

12 **SEC. 3. PRESERVE AMERICA GRANT PROGRAM.**

13 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Section 311102 of title 54,  
14 United States Code, is amended—

15 (1) in subsection (d)—

16 (A) in paragraph (1), by inserting “and  
17 the Secretary of Commerce” after “Council”;  
18 and

19 (B) by adding at the end the following:

20 “(3) ADVISORY ROLE OF SECRETARY OF COM-  
21 MERCE.—The Secretary of Commerce shall advise  
22 the program with respect to job creation, economic  
23 growth, and tourism policy and promotion.”; and

24 (2) by adding at the end the following:

25 “(f) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—

1           “(1) IN GENERAL.—For any fiscal year for  
2           which funds are not made available to provide grants  
3           under this section, to the extent practicable, the pro-  
4           gram shall, in lieu of the grants, provide technical  
5           assistance to the eligible entities described in sub-  
6           section (a) for projects that meet the eligibility re-  
7           quirements described in subsection (b), as identified  
8           on the list of projects prepared by the Secretary in  
9           accordance with subsection (d).

10           “(2) LIMITATION.—The Secretary may take  
11           into account the availability of staff resources at the  
12           Department of the Interior, the Council, and the De-  
13           partment of Commerce for purposes of determining  
14           the number of projects that are provided technical  
15           assistance under this subsection.

16           “(3) FORM.—The form of technical assistance  
17           under paragraph (1) may include technical assist-  
18           ance provided by—

19                   “(A) the Director, with respect to—

20                           “(i) best practices in visitor services;

21                           “(ii) the conduct of research, inven-  
22                           tories, and surveys;

23                           “(iii) the documentation of historic re-  
24                           sources; and

1 “(iv) the interpretation and promotion  
2 of cultural and heritage assets;

3 “(B) the Council, with respect to historic  
4 preservation initiatives and best practices in  
5 stewardship; and

6 “(C) the Secretary of Commerce, with re-  
7 spect to economic development and job creation  
8 resources.”.

9 (b) PROGRAM METRICS.—Chapter 3111 of title 54,  
10 United States Code, is amended—

11 (1) by redesignating section 311105 as section  
12 311106; and

13 (2) by inserting after section 311104 the fol-  
14 lowing:

15 **“§ 311105. Reports**

16 “(a) METRICS.—Not later than 180 days after the  
17 date of enactment of the Explore America Act of 2022,  
18 the Secretary, in consultation with the Council and the  
19 Secretary of Commerce, shall develop specific metrics to  
20 measure the effectiveness of the program, including—

21 “(1) the economic impact of the program on  
22 local communities (including Native American com-  
23 munities and National Heritage Areas); and

24 “(2) the effect of the program on efforts to pre-  
25 serve heritage resources.

1       “(b) GRANTEE REPORT.—Not later than 2 years  
 2 after the date on which a grantee receives a grant or tech-  
 3 nical assistance under this chapter, the grantee shall sub-  
 4 mit to the Secretary a report that—

5               “(1) describes the outcome of the project that  
 6 was provided a grant or technical assistance under  
 7 this chapter; and

8               “(2) based on the metrics developed under sub-  
 9 section (a), assesses—

10                   “(A) the accomplishments of the project;  
 11 and

12                   “(B) the impact of the project on the com-  
 13 munity in which the project was carried out.

14       “(c) ANNUAL REPORTS.—The Secretary shall submit  
 15 an annual report to the appropriate committees of Con-  
 16 gress that includes data provided by grantees to dem-  
 17 onstrate the economic impact of the program.”.

18       (c) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of sec-  
 19 tions for chapter 3111 of title 54, United States Code,  
 20 is amended by striking the item relating to section 311105  
 21 and inserting the following:

“311105. Reports.

“311106. Authorization of appropriations.”.

1 **SEC. 4. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE PARTNERSHIPS WITH**  
 2 **GATEWAY COMMUNITIES.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subdivision 1 of division B of sub-  
 4 title III of title 54, United States Code, is amended by  
 5 adding at the end the following:

6 **“CHAPTER 3092—PARTNERSHIPS WITH**  
 7 **GATEWAY COMMUNITIES**

“Sec.

“309201. Definitions.

“309202. Partnerships with gateway communities.

“309203. Report.

“309204. Authorization of appropriations.

8 **“§ 309201. Definitions**

9 “In this chapter:

10 “(1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COM-  
 11 MITTEE.—The term ‘appropriate congressional com-  
 12 mittee’ means—

13 “(A) the Committee on Commerce,  
 14 Science, and Transportation of the Senate;

15 “(B) the Committee on Energy and Nat-  
 16 ural Resources of the Senate;

17 “(C) the Committee on Appropriations of  
 18 the Senate;

19 “(D) the Committee on Energy and Com-  
 20 merce of the House of Representatives;

21 “(E) the Committee on Natural Resources  
 22 of the House of Representatives; and

1                   “(F) the Committee on Appropriations of  
2                   the House of Representatives.

3                   “(2) GATEWAY COMMUNITY.—The term ‘gate-  
4                   way community’ means a community adjacent to a  
5                   unit of the System, including a Native American  
6                   community or a National Heritage Area.

7                   “(3) HERITAGE TOURISM.—The term ‘heritage  
8                   tourism’ has the meaning given the term in section  
9                   311101.

10   **“§ 309202. Partnerships with gateway communities**

11                   “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall, to the ex-  
12                   tent practicable, offer to enter into partnerships with gate-  
13                   way communities to leverage heritage tourism assets to  
14                   strengthen local economies and create jobs in the gateway  
15                   communities with the goal of establishing a standardized  
16                   framework for partnerships throughout the System, in-  
17                   cluding through—

18                   “(1) providing financial assistance to gateway  
19                   communities to support outreach and promotional  
20                   efforts;

21                   “(2) providing technical assistance to gateway  
22                   communities based on Service best practices in tour-  
23                   ism development and visitor management, such as—

24                   “(A) inventorying tourism resources in the  
25                   gateway community;

1 “(B) identifying historic heritage and cul-  
2 tural resources;

3 “(C) engaging collaborative partners and  
4 stakeholders;

5 “(D) designing community outreach and  
6 participation strategies;

7 “(E) developing concept plans for trails,  
8 parks, historic resources, and natural areas;

9 “(F) developing sustainable tourism devel-  
10 opment frameworks for community planning;  
11 and

12 “(G) encouraging regional strategies for  
13 tourism development and promotion; and

14 “(3) assisting gateway communities in accessing  
15 additional Federal resources available to strengthen  
16 tourism assets and support economic development.

17 “(b) OBTAINING FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL AS-  
18 SISTANCE.—The Secretary, in consultation with stake-  
19 holders of System units, shall establish a process through  
20 which States, units of local government, and Tribal gov-  
21 ernments may apply for designation as a gateway commu-  
22 nity to become eligible for financial and technical assist-  
23 ance made available under this section.

24 “(c) METRICS.—The Secretary, in consultation with  
25 gateway communities, shall develop metrics to measure



1 the impact of the financial and technical assistance pro-  
 2 vided to gateway communities under this section.

3 **“§ 309203. Report**

4 “Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment  
 5 of this Act, the Secretary shall submit to the appropriate  
 6 congressional committees a report that—

7 “(1) describes the efforts of the Secretary to  
 8 partner with gateway communities under this chap-  
 9 ter;

10 “(2) analyzes the results of the financial and  
 11 technical assistance using the metrics developed  
 12 under section 309202(c); and

13 “(3) identifies—

14 “(A) the next steps that should be taken to  
 15 improve partnerships with gateway commu-  
 16 nities; and

17 “(B) any actions that the Secretary will  
 18 take to improve the partnerships.

19 **“§ 309204. Authorization of appropriations**

20 “There are authorized to be appropriated such sums  
 21 as are necessary to carry out this chapter.”.

22 (b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of chap-  
 23 ters for title 54, United States Code, is amended by insert-  
 24 ing after the item relating to chapter 3091 the following:

“3092. Partnerships with gateway communities ..... 309201”.

