

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2562

To address the nationwide shortage of tree seedlings, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 15, 2021

Mr. BENTZ (for himself, Mr. WESTERMAN, Mr. NEWHOUSE, and Mr. GOSAR)
introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Ag-
riculture

A BILL

To address the nationwide shortage of tree seedlings, 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 “Solving Our Shortages
5 for Seedlings Act” or the “SOS for Seedlings Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. SEEDLING STRATEGY.**

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the
8 date of the enactment of this section, the Secretary of Ag-
9 riculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service,
10 shall develop and implement a national strategy to in-

1 crease the capacity of Federal, State, Tribal, and private
2 nurseries to address the nationwide shortage of tree seed-
3 lings.

4 (b) ELEMENTS.—The strategy required under sub-
5 section (a) shall—

6 (1) be based on the best available science and
7 data; and

8 (2) identify and address—

9 (A) regional seedling shortages of bareroot
10 and container tree seedlings;

11 (B) regional reforestation opportunities
12 and the seedling supply necessary to fulfill such
13 opportunities;

14 (C) opportunities to enhance seedling di-
15 versity and close gaps in seed inventories; and

16 (D) barriers to expanding, enhancing, or
17 creating new infrastructure to increase nursery
18 capacity.

19 **SEC. 3. FEDERAL NURSERIES.**

20 Section 2 of the Act of June 9, 1930 (16 U.S.C.
21 576a; commonly known as the “Knutson-Vandenberg
22 Act”), is amended by striking “each fiscal year after year
23 ending June 30, 1934, not to exceed \$400,000,” and in-
24 serting “each of fiscal years 2021 through 2030,
25 \$25,000,000,”.

1 **SEC. 4. LOAN PROGRAM FOR STATE, TRIBAL, AND PRIVATE**
2 **NURSERIES.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Agriculture shall
4 carry out a loan program to make or guarantee qualified
5 nursery loans to eligible entities under this section.

6 (b) APPLICATION.—To be eligible to receive a quali-
7 fied nursery loan or loan guarantee under this section, an
8 eligible entity shall submit to the Secretary of Agriculture
9 an application at such time, in such manner, and con-
10 taining such information as the Secretary may require, in-
11 cluding a plan to maintain the genetic and physical quality
12 of seedlings of the eligible entity.

13 (c) PRIORITY.—In making qualified nursery loans or
14 loan guarantees under this section, the Secretary of Agri-
15 culture shall give priority to eligible entities that—

16 (1) are small businesses, in particular small
17 businesses located in rural areas;

18 (2) create or support jobs, particularly in rural
19 areas; and

20 (3) serve regions with high demand for reforest-
21 ation.

22 (d) QUALIFIED NURSERY PROJECT.—A loan or loan
23 guarantee under this section may only be used to carry
24 out a qualified nursery project to—

25 (1) develop, expand, enhance, or improve nurs-
26 ery capacity or infrastructure;

1 (2) establish nurseries; or

2 (3) develop or implement quality control meas-
3 ures at nurseries.

4 (e) LOAN AND LOAN GUARANTEE TERMS.—

5 (1) AMOUNT GUARANTEED.—The portion of a
6 loan that the Secretary of Agriculture may guar-
7 antee under this section may not be greater than 80
8 percent of the principal amount of such loan.

9 (2) REPAYMENT.—The period of repayment for
10 a loan made under this section shall not exceed 20
11 years.

12 (f) ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS.—

13 (1) LIMITATION ON AUTHORITY.—The total
14 amount of qualified nursery loans made or guaran-
15 teed under this section by the Secretary may not ex-
16 ceed \$1,000,000,000.

17 (2) DISTRIBUTION.—The Secretary shall en-
18 sure, to the maximum extent practicable, that loans
19 made or guaranteed under this section are distrib-
20 uted across diverse geographic regions.

21 (g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

22 (1) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term “eligible enti-
23 ty” means—

24 (A) a State, Tribal, or local government; or

1 (B) a domestic private, non-profit, or coop-
2 erative organization.

3 (2) NURSERY.—The term “‘nursery’” means a
4 State, Tribal, or local government or private owned
5 facility that grows, stores, extracts, or monitors
6 bareroot or container tree seedlings.

7 (3) QUALIFIED NURSERY LOAN.—The term
8 “qualified nursery loan” means a low-interest loan,
9 the proceeds of which are used to cover the costs to
10 the borrower of carrying out a qualified nursery
11 project described in subsection (d).

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