

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1603

To require the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a Joint Chiefs Landscape Restoration Partnership program, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 13, 2021

Mr. BENNET (for himself and Mr. HOEVEN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

A BILL

To require the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a Joint Chiefs Landscape Restoration Partnership 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 “Joint Chiefs Land-
5 scape Restoration Partnership Act of 2021”.

6 **SEC. 2. JOINT CHIEFS LANDSCAPE RESTORATION PART-**
7 **NERSHIP PROGRAM.**

8 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

1 (1) CHIEFS.—The term “Chiefs” means the
 2 Chief of the Forest Service and the Chief of the
 3 Natural Resources Conservation Service.

4 (2) ELIGIBLE ACTIVITY.—The term “eligible
 5 activity” means an activity—

6 (A) to reduce the risk of wildfire;

7 (B) to protect water quality and supply; or

8 (C) to improve wildlife habitat for at-risk
 9 species.

10 (3) PROGRAM.—The term “program” means
 11 the Joint Chiefs Landscape Restoration Partnership
 12 program established under subsection (b)(1).

13 (4) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
 14 the Secretary of Agriculture.

15 (5) WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE.—The term
 16 “wildland-urban interface” has the meaning given
 17 the term in section 101 of the Healthy Forests Res-
 18 toration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6511).

19 (b) ESTABLISHMENT.—

20 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish
 21 a Joint Chiefs Landscape Restoration Partnership
 22 program to improve the health and resilience of for-
 23 est landscapes across National Forest System land
 24 and State, Tribal, and private land.

1 (2) ADMINISTRATION.—The Secretary shall ad-
2 minister the program by coordinating eligible activi-
3 ties conducted on National Forest System land and
4 State, Tribal, or private land across a forest land-
5 scape to improve the health and resilience of the for-
6 est landscape by—

7 (A) assisting producers and landowners in
8 implementing eligible activities on eligible pri-
9 vate or Tribal land using the applicable pro-
10 grams and authorities administered by the
11 Chief of the Natural Resources Conservation
12 Service under title XII of the Food Security Act
13 of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3801 et seq.), not including
14 the conservation reserve program established
15 under subchapter B of chapter 1 of subtitle D
16 of that title (16 U.S.C. 3831 et seq.); and

17 (B) conducting eligible activities on Na-
18 tional Forest System land or assisting land-
19 owners in implementing eligible activities on
20 State, Tribal, or private land using the applica-
21 ble programs and authorities administered by
22 the Chief of the Forest Service.

23 (c) SELECTION OF ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES.—The ap-
24 propriate Regional Forester and State Conservationist

1 shall jointly submit to the Chiefs on an annual basis pro-
 2 posals for eligible activities under the program.

3 (d) EVALUATION CRITERIA.—In evaluating and se-
 4 lecting proposals submitted under subsection (c), the
 5 Chiefs shall consider—

6 (1) criteria including whether the proposal—

7 (A) reduces wildfire risk in a municipal
 8 watershed or the wildland-urban interface;

9 (B) was developed through a collaborative
 10 process with participation from diverse stake-
 11 holders;

12 (C) increases forest workforce capacity or
 13 forest business infrastructure and development;

14 (D) leverages existing authorities and non-
 15 Federal funding;

16 (E) provides measurable outcomes; or

17 (F) supports established State and re-
 18 gional priorities; and

19 (2) such other criteria relating to the merits of
 20 the proposals as the Chiefs determine to be appro-
 21 priate.

22 (e) OUTREACH.—The Secretary shall provide—

23 (1) public notice on the websites of the Forest
 24 Service and the Natural Resources Conservation
 25 Service describing—

1 (A) the solicitation of proposals under sub-
2 section (c); and

3 (B) the criteria for selecting proposals in
4 accordance with subsection (d); and

5 (2) information relating to the program and ac-
6 tivities funded under the program to States, Indian
7 Tribes, units of local government, and private land-
8 owners.

9 (f) EXCLUSIONS.—An eligible activity may not be
10 carried out under the program—

11 (1) in a wilderness area or designated wilder-
12 ness study area;

13 (2) in an inventoried roadless area;

14 (3) on any Federal land on which, by Act of
15 Congress or Presidential proclamation, the removal
16 of vegetation is restricted or prohibited; or

17 (4) in an area in which the eligible activity
18 would be inconsistent with the applicable land and
19 resource management plan.

20 (g) ACCOUNTABILITY.—

21 (1) INITIAL REPORT.—Not later than 1 year
22 after the date of enactment of this Act, the Sec-
23 retary shall submit to Congress a report providing
24 recommendations to Congress relating to the pro-
25 gram, including a review of—

1 (A) funding mechanisms for the program;

2 (B) staff capacity to carry out the pro-

3 gram;

4 (C) privacy laws applicable to the program;

5 (D) data collection under the program;

6 (E) monitoring and outcomes under the

7 program; and

8 (F) such other matters as the Secretary

9 considers to be appropriate.

10 (2) ANNUAL REPORTS.—The Chiefs shall annu-

11 ally submit to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutri-

12 tion, and Forestry and the Committee on Appropria-

13 tions of the Senate and the Committee on Agri-

14 culture and the Committee on Appropriations of the

15 House of Representatives a report describing

16 projects for which funding is provided under the pro-

17 gram, including the status and outcomes of those

18 projects.

19 (h) FUNDING.—

20 (1) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—In

21 addition to amounts otherwise available to the Sec-

22 retary to carry out the program, there is authorized

23 to be appropriated to the Secretary to carry out the

24 program \$90,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2021

25 through 2030.

1 (2) DURATION OF AVAILABILITY.—Funds made
2 available under paragraph (1) shall remain available
3 until expended.

4 (3) DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS.—Of the funds
5 made available under paragraph (1)—

6 (A) not less than 40 percent shall be allo-
7 cated to carry out eligible activities through the
8 Natural Resources Conservation Service;

9 (B) not less than 40 percent shall be allo-
10 cated to carry out eligible activities through the
11 Forest Service; and

12 (C) the remaining funds shall be allocated
13 by the Chiefs to the Natural Resources Con-
14 servations Service or the Forest Service—

15 (i) to carry out eligible activities; or

16 (ii) for other purposes, such as tech-
17 nical assistance, project development, or
18 local capacity building.

○