

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 843

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

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 4, 2025

Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Mr. CORNYN, Mr. TILLIS, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, and Mr. BOOKER) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

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 and Rehabilitation Act of 2025”.

6 **SEC. 2. SEA TURTLE RESCUE, REHABILITATION, AND RE-**
7 **SPONSE.**

8 Section 408 of the Marine Mammal Protection Act
9 of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1421f–1) is amended—

1 (1) in subsection (b), by adding at the end the
2 following:

3 “(10) SEA TURTLE RESCUE, REHABILITATION,
4 AND RESPONSE.—

5 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the avail-
6 ability of appropriations specific to address sea
7 turtle rescue, rehabilitation, and response, the
8 Secretary of Commerce and the Director of the
9 United States Fish and Wildlife Service shall
10 include separate eligibility for grants under this
11 subsection to address the purposes described in
12 paragraph (2) with respect to sea turtles.

13 “(B) CONDITIONS OF GRANT.—A grant
14 awarded under this subsection to address sea
15 turtle rescue, rehabilitation, and response
16 shall—

17 “(i) include the equivalent grant cri-
18 teria and administration authorities and
19 requirements described under paragraph
20 (3), subparagraphs (A) and (B) of para-
21 graph (4), and paragraphs (5) through (9),
22 developed, as appropriate, and awarded
23 separately for sea turtles and in consulta-
24 tion with the United States Fish and Wild-

1 life Service in lieu of the Marine Mammal
2 Commission; and

3 “(ii) in addition to the considerations
4 under paragraph (4)(B), also consider re-
5 habilitation of stranded sea turtles.

6 “(C) ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA.—In order to
7 apply for a grant awarded under this subsection
8 to address sea turtle rescue, rehabilitation, and
9 response, an entity shall—

10 “(i) submit an application described
11 in paragraph (5) to the Secretary of Com-
12 merce with respect to sea turtles;

13 “(ii) be authorized by and in compli-
14 ance with—

15 “(I) an authorization issued
16 under section 10(a)(1)(A) of the En-
17 dangered Species Act of 1973 (16
18 U.S.C. 1539(a)(1)(A)) with respect to
19 sea turtles; or

20 “(II) a cooperative agreement en-
21 tered into under section 6 of the En-
22 dangered Species Act of 1973 (16
23 U.S.C. 1535) with respect to sea tur-
24 tles;

1 “(iii) comply with the standard condi-
 2 tions for care and maintenance of captive
 3 sea turtles prescribed by the Secretary of
 4 the Interior when relevant facilities will be
 5 utilized for such purposes; and

6 “(iv) comply with all relevant data re-
 7 porting, requirements, such as the Sea
 8 Turtle Stranding and Salvage Network
 9 data collection requirements.”;

10 (2) by striking subsection (c) and inserting the
 11 following:

12 “(c) RESCUE AND RAPID RESPONSE FUNDS.—

13 “(1) IN GENERAL.—There is established in the
 14 Treasury of the United States—

15 “(A) an interest-bearing fund to known as
 16 the ‘Joseph R. Geraci Marine Mammal Rescue
 17 and Rapid Response Fund’; and

18 “(B) an interest-bearing fund to be known
 19 as the ‘Sea Turtle Rescue, Rehabilitation, and
 20 Rapid Response Fund’.

21 “(2) USE OF FUNDS.—Amounts in the funds
 22 established under paragraph (1) shall be available
 23 only for use by the Secretary to provide emergency
 24 assistance.”; and

25 (3) in subsection (d)—

1 (A) in paragraph (1)—

2 (i) in subparagraph (A), by inserting
3 “marine mammal rescue and response”
4 after “to carry out the”;

5 (ii) by redesignating subparagraph
6 (B) as subparagraph (C);

7 (iii) by inserting after clause (ii) of
8 subparagraph (A) the following:

9 “(B) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS
10 WITH RESPECT TO SEA TURTLE RESCUE, REHA-
11 BILITATION, AND RESPONSE.—There is author-
12 ized to be appropriated for the Secretary of
13 Commerce to carry out the sea turtle rescue, re-
14 habilitation, and response grant program under
15 subsection (b)(10), \$5,000,000 for each of fis-
16 cal years 2025 through 2030, to remain avail-
17 able until expended.”; and

18 (iv) in subparagraph (C), as redesign-
19 nated by clause (ii), by inserting “or (B)”
20 after “subparagraph (A)”; and

21 (B) by striking paragraph (2) and insert-
22 ing the following:

23 “(2) RESCUE AND RAPID RESPONSE FUNDS.—
24 There is authorized to be appropriated—

1 “(A) to the Joseph R. Geraci Marine
2 Mammal Rescue and Rapid Response Fund
3 \$500,000 for each of fiscal years 2025 through
4 2030; and

5 “(B) to the Sea Turtle Rescue, Rehabilita-
6 tion, and Rapid Response Fund \$500,000 for
7 each of fiscal years 2025 through 2030.”.

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