

Calendar No. 217

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION**S. 1894**

To designate Regional Ocean Partnerships of the National Oceanic and
Atmospheric Administration, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 27, 2021

Mr. WICKER (for himself and Ms. HASSAN) introduced the following bill;
which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce,
Science, and Transportation

DECEMBER 17, 2021

Reported by Ms. CANTWELL, with an amendment

[Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in *italic*]

A BILL

To designate Regional Ocean Partnerships of the National
Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 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 “Regional Ocean Part-
5 nership Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS; SENSE OF CONGRESS; PURPOSES.**

2 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following find-
3 ings:

4 (1) The ocean and coastal waters of the United
5 States are foundational to the economy, security,
6 global competitiveness, and well-being of the United
7 States and continuously serve the people of the
8 United States and other countries as an important
9 source of food, energy, economic productivity, recre-
10 ation, beauty, and enjoyment.

11 (2) Over many years, the resource productivity
12 and water quality of the ocean and coastal areas of
13 the United States have been diminished by pollution,
14 increasing population demands, economic develop-
15 ment, and natural and man-made hazard events,
16 both acute and chronic.

17 (3) Ocean and coastal areas of the United
18 States are managed by State and Federal resource
19 agencies and regulated on an interstate and regional
20 scale by various overlapping Federal authorities,
21 thereby creating a significant need for interstate co-
22 ordination to enhance regional priorities, including
23 the ecological and economic health of those areas.

24 (4) Tribal governments have unique expertise
25 and knowledge important for the stewardship of the
26 ocean and coastal waters of the United States.

1 (b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-
2 gress that—

3 (1) the United States should seek to support
4 interstate coordination of shared regional priorities
5 relating to the management, conservation, resilience,
6 and restoration of ocean and coastal areas to maxi-
7 mize efficiencies through collaborative regional ef-
8 forts by Regional Ocean Partnerships, in consulta-
9 tion with Federal and State agencies, Tribal govern-
10 ments, and local authorities;

11 (2) such efforts would enhance existing and ef-
12 fective State coastal management efforts based on
13 shared regional priorities; and

14 (3) Regional Ocean Partnerships should consult
15 with Tribal governments and may include represen-
16 tation from Tribal governments.

17 (c) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this Act are as fol-
18 lows:

19 (1) To complement and expand cooperative vol-
20 untary efforts intended to manage and restore ocean
21 and coastal areas spanning across multiple State
22 boundaries.

23 (2) To expand Federal support for monitoring,
24 data management, and restoration activities in ocean
25 and coastal areas.

1 ~~(3) To commit the United States to a com-~~
2 ~~prehensive cooperative program to achieve improved~~
3 ~~water quality in, and improvements in the produc-~~
4 ~~tivity of living resources of, all coastal ecosystems.~~

5 (4) To authorize Regional Ocean Partnerships
6 as intergovernmental coordinators for shared inter-
7 state and regional priorities relating to the collabo-
8 rative management of the large marine ecosystems,
9 thereby reducing duplication of efforts and maxi-
10 mizing opportunities to leverage support in the
11 ocean and coastal regions.

12 ~~(5) To empower States to take a lead role in~~
13 ~~managing oceans and coasts.~~

14 (6) To incorporate Tribal interests in the man-
15 agement of oceans and coasts and provide funding
16 to support Tribal ocean and coastal resiliency activi-
17 ties in coordination with Regional Ocean Partner-
18 ships.

19 (7) To enable Regional Ocean Partnerships, or
20 designated fiscal management entities of such part-
21 nerships, to receive Federal funding to conduct the
22 scientific research, conservation and restoration ac-
23 tivities, and priority coordination on shared regional
24 priorities necessary to achieve the purposes described
25 in paragraphs (1) through (6).

1 **SEC. 3. REGIONAL OCEAN PARTNERSHIPS.**

2 (a) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

3 (1) **ADMINISTRATOR.**—The term “Adminis-
4 trator” means the Administrator of the National
5 Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

6 (2) **COASTAL STATE.**—The term “coastal state”
7 has the meaning given that term in section 304 of
8 the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (16
9 U.S.C. 1453).

10 (3) **INDIAN TRIBE.**—The term “Indian Tribe”
11 has the meaning given that term in section 4 of the
12 Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance
13 Act (25 U.S.C. 5304).

14 (4) **INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.**—The
15 term “institution of higher education” has the
16 meaning given that term in section 101 of the High-
17 er Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001).

18 (b) **REGIONAL OCEAN PARTNERSHIPS.**—

19 (1) **IN GENERAL.**—A coastal state may partici-
20 pate in a Regional Ocean Partnership with one or
21 more other coastal states that share a common
22 ocean or coastal area with the coastal state, without
23 regard to whether the coastal states are contiguous.

24 (2) **APPLICATION.**—The Governor of a coastal
25 state or the Governors of a group of coastal states
26 may apply to the Secretary of Commerce, on behalf

1 of a partnership, for the partnership to receive des-
2 ignation as a Regional Ocean Partnership if the
3 partnership—

4 (A) meets the requirements under para-
5 graph (3); and

6 (B) submits an application for such des-
7 ignation in such manner, in such form, and
8 containing such information as the Secretary
9 may require.

10 (3) REQUIREMENTS.—A partnership is eligible
11 for designation as a Regional Ocean Partnership by
12 the Secretary under paragraph (2) if the partner-
13 ship—

14 (A) is established to coordinate the inter-
15 state management of ocean and coastal re-
16 sources;

17 (B) focuses on the environmental issues af-
18 fecting the ocean and coastal areas of the mem-
19 bers participating in the partnership;

20 (C) complements existing State coastal and
21 ocean management efforts on an interstate
22 scale, focusing on shared regional priorities;

23 (D) does not have a regulatory function;
24 and

1 (E) is not duplicative of an existing Re-
 2 gional Ocean Partnership designated under
 3 paragraph (4), as determined by the Secretary.

4 (4) DESIGNATION OF CERTAIN ENTITIES AS RE-
 5 GIONAL OCEAN PARTNERSHIPS.—Notwithstanding
 6 paragraph (2) or (3), the following entities are des-
 7 ignated as Regional Ocean Partnerships:

8 (A) The Gulf of Mexico Alliance, comprised
 9 of the States of Alabama, Florida, Louisiana,
 10 Mississippi, and Texas.

11 (B) The Northeast Regional Ocean Coun-
 12 cil, comprised of the States of Maine, Vermont,
 13 New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut,
 14 and Rhode Island.

15 (C) The Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on
 16 the Ocean, comprised of the States of New
 17 York, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and
 18 Virginia.

19 (D) The West Coast Ocean Alliance, com-
 20 prised of the States of California, Oregon, and
 21 Washington and the coastal Indian Tribes
 22 therein.

23 (e) GOVERNING BODIES OF REGIONAL OCEAN PART-
 24 NERSHIPS.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—A Regional Ocean Partner-
2 ship designated under subsection (b) shall be gov-
3 erned by a governing body.

4 (2) MEMBERSHIP.—A governing body described
5 in paragraph (1)—

6 (A) shall be comprised, at a minimum, of
7 voting members from each coastal state partici-
8 pating in the Regional Ocean Partnership, des-
9 ignated by the Governor of the coastal state;
10 and

11 (B) may include such other members as
12 the partnership considers appropriate.

13 (d) FUNCTIONS.—A Regional Ocean Partnership des-
14 ignated under subsection (b) may perform the following
15 functions:

16 (1) Promote coordination of the actions of the
17 agencies of coastal states participating in the part-
18 nership with the actions of the appropriate officials
19 of Federal agencies and State and Tribal govern-
20 ments in developing strategies—

21 (A) to conserve living resources, increase
22 valuable habitats, enhance coastal resilience and
23 ocean management, promote ecological and eco-
24 nomic health, and address such other issues re-
25 lated to the shared ocean or coastal area as are

1 determined to be a shared, regional priority by
2 those states; and

3 ~~(B) to manage regional data portals and~~
4 ~~develop associated data products for purposes~~
5 ~~that support the priorities of the partnership.~~

6 ~~(2) In cooperation with appropriate Federal and~~
7 ~~State agencies, Tribal governments, and local au-~~
8 ~~thorities, develop and implement specific action~~
9 ~~plans to carry out coordination goals.~~

10 ~~(3) Coordinate and implement priority plans~~
11 ~~and projects, and facilitate science, research, mod-~~
12 ~~eling, monitoring, data collection, and other activi-~~
13 ~~ties that support the goals of the partnership~~
14 ~~through the provision of grants and contracts under~~
15 ~~subsection (f).~~

16 ~~(4) Engage, coordinate, and collaborate with~~
17 ~~relevant governmental entities and stakeholders to~~
18 ~~address ocean and coastal related matters that re-~~
19 ~~quire interagency or intergovernmental solutions.~~

20 ~~(5) Implement outreach programs for public in-~~
21 ~~formation, education, and participation to foster~~
22 ~~stewardship of the resources of the ocean and coast-~~
23 ~~al areas, as relevant.~~

24 ~~(6) Develop and make available, through publi-~~
25 ~~cations, technical assistance, and other appropriate~~

1 means, information pertaining to cross-jurisdictional
 2 issues being addressed through the coordinated ac-
 3 tivities of the partnership.

4 (7) Serve as a liaison with, and provide infor-
 5 mation to, international counterparts, as appropriate
 6 on priority issues for the partnership.

7 (e) CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT.—A Regional
 8 Ocean Partnership designated under subsection (b) shall
 9 maintain mechanisms for consultation and engagement
 10 with the following:

11 (1) The Federal Government.

12 (2) Tribal governments.

13 (3) Nongovernmental entities, including aca-
 14 demic organizations, nonprofit organizations, and
 15 businesses.

16 (f) GRANTS AND CONTRACTS.—

17 (1) IN GENERAL.—A Regional Ocean Partner-
 18 ship designated under subsection (b) may, in coordi-
 19 nation with existing Federal and State management
 20 programs, from amounts made available to the part-
 21 nership by the Administrator or the head of another
 22 Federal agency provide grants and enter into con-
 23 tracts for the purposes described in paragraph (2).

24 (2) PURPOSES.—The purposes described in this
 25 paragraph include any of the following:

1 (A) Monitoring the water quality and living
2 resources of multi-State ocean and coastal eco-
3 systems and coastal communities.

4 (B) Researching and addressing the effects
5 of natural and human-induced environmental
6 changes on—

7 (i) ocean and coastal ecosystems; and

8 (ii) coastal communities.

9 (C) Developing and executing cooperative
10 strategies that—

11 (i) address regional data issues identi-
12 fied by the partnership; and

13 (ii) will result in more effective man-
14 agement of common ocean and coastal
15 areas.

16 (g) REPORT REQUIRED.—

17 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 5 years after
18 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Adminis-
19 trator, in coordination with the Regional Ocean
20 Partnerships designated under subsection (b), shall
21 submit to Congress a report on the partnerships.

22 (2) REPORT REQUIREMENTS.—The report re-
23 quired by paragraph (1) shall include the following:

1 (A) An assessment of the overall status of
2 the work of the Regional Ocean Partnerships
3 designated under subsection (b).

4 (B) An assessment of the effectiveness of
5 the partnerships in supporting regional prior-
6 ities relating to the management of common
7 ocean and coastal areas.

8 (C) An identification of any duplication of
9 efforts between the partnerships and other enti-
10 ties.

11 (D) An assessment of the benefits and
12 costs of the partnerships.

13 (E) An assessment of the effectiveness of
14 the strategies that the partnerships are sup-
15 porting or implementing and the extent to
16 which the priority needs of the regions covered
17 by the partnerships are being met through such
18 strategies.

19 (F) An assessment of how the efforts of
20 the partnerships support or enhance Federal
21 and State efforts consistent with the purposes
22 of this Act.

23 (G) Such recommendations as the Admin-
24 istrator may have for improving—

1 (i) efforts of the partnerships to sup-
 2 port the purposes of this Act; and

3 (ii) collective strategies that support
 4 the purposes of this Act in coordination
 5 and consultation with all relevant Federal,
 6 State, and Tribal entities.

7 (H) The distribution of funds from each
 8 partnership for each fiscal year covered by the
 9 report.

10 (h) AVAILABILITY OF FEDERAL FUNDS.—In addition
 11 to amounts made available to the Regional Ocean Partner-
 12 ships designated under subsection (b) by the Adminis-
 13 trator under this section, the head of any other Federal
 14 agency may provide grants to, enter into contracts with,
 15 or otherwise provide funding to such partnerships.

16 (i) AUTHORITIES.—Nothing in this section estab-
 17 lishes any new legal or regulatory authority of the Na-
 18 tional Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration or of the
 19 Regional Ocean Partnerships designated under subsection
 20 (b), other than—

21 (1) the authority of the Administrator to pro-
 22 vide amounts to the partnerships; and

23 (2) the authority of the partnerships to provide
 24 grants and enter into contracts under subsection (f).

25 (j) FUNDING.—

1 ~~(1) REGIONAL OCEAN PARTNERSHIPS.—~~There
2 are authorized to be appropriated to the National
3 Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration the fol-
4 lowing amounts to be made available to the Regional
5 Ocean Partnerships designated under subsection (b)
6 or designated fiscal management entities of such
7 partnerships to carry out activities of the partner-
8 ships under this Act:

9 ~~(A) \$10,100,000 for fiscal year 2022.~~

10 ~~(B) \$10,202,000 for fiscal year 2023.~~

11 ~~(C) \$10,306,040 for fiscal year 2024.~~

12 ~~(D) \$10,412,160 for fiscal year 2025.~~

13 ~~(E) \$10,520,404 for fiscal year 2026.~~

14 ~~(2) DISTRIBUTION OF AMOUNTS.—~~Amounts
15 made available under paragraph (1) shall be divided
16 evenly among the Regional Ocean Partnerships des-
17 ignated under subsection (b).

18 ~~(3) TRIBAL CONSULTATION.—~~There is author-
19 ized to be appropriated to the National Oceanic and
20 Atmospheric Administration \$1,000,000 for each of
21 fiscal years 2022 through 2026 for Indian Tribes to
22 be distributed for purposes of participation in or en-
23 gagement with the Regional Ocean Partnerships.

24 ~~(4) DERIVATION.—~~Funds to carry out the ac-
25 tivities under this Act shall be derived from amounts

1 authorized to be appropriated pursuant to para-
 2 graphs (1) and (3) that are appropriated after the
 3 date of the enactment of this Act.

4 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

5 *This Act may be cited as the “Regional Ocean Partner-*
 6 *ship Act”.*

7 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS; SENSE OF CONGRESS; PURPOSES.**

8 (a) *FINDINGS.*—Congress makes the following findings:

9 (1) *The ocean and coastal waters and the Great*
 10 *Lakes of the United States are foundational to the*
 11 *economy, security, global competitiveness, and well-*
 12 *being of the United States and continuously serve the*
 13 *people of the United States and other countries as an*
 14 *important source of food, energy, economic produc-*
 15 *tivity, recreation, beauty, and enjoyment.*

16 (2) *Over many years, the resource productivity*
 17 *and water quality of the ocean, coastal, and Great*
 18 *Lakes areas of the United States have been dimin-*
 19 *ished by pollution, increasing population demands,*
 20 *economic development, and natural and man-made*
 21 *hazard events, both acute and chronic.*

22 (3) *The ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes areas of*
 23 *the United States are managed by State and Federal*
 24 *resource agencies and Indian Tribes and regulated on*
 25 *an interstate and regional scale by various overlap-*

1 *ping Federal authorities, thereby creating a signifi-*
2 *cant need for interstate coordination to enhance re-*
3 *gional priorities, including the ecological and eco-*
4 *nomi health of those areas.*

5 *(4) Indian Tribes have unique expertise and*
6 *knowledge important for the stewardship of the ocean*
7 *and coastal waters and the Great Lakes of the United*
8 *States.*

9 *(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress*
10 *that—*

11 *(1) the United States should seek to support*
12 *interstate coordination of shared regional priorities*
13 *relating to the management, conservation, resilience,*
14 *and restoration of ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes*
15 *areas to maximize efficiencies through collaborative*
16 *regional efforts by Regional Ocean Partnerships, in*
17 *coordination with Federal and State agencies, Indian*
18 *Tribes, and local authorities;*

19 *(2) such efforts would enhance existing and effec-*
20 *tive ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes management ef-*
21 *forts of States and Indian Tribes based on shared re-*
22 *gional priorities; and*

23 *(3) Regional Ocean Partnerships should coordi-*
24 *nate with Indian Tribes.*

1 (c) *PURPOSES.*—*The purposes of this Act are as fol-*
2 *lows:*

3 (1) *To complement and expand cooperative vol-*
4 *untary efforts intended to manage, conserve, and re-*
5 *store ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes areas spanning*
6 *across multiple State and Indian Tribe jurisdictions.*

7 (2) *To expand Federal support for monitoring,*
8 *data management, restoration, research, and con-*
9 *servation activities in ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes*
10 *areas.*

11 (3) *To commit the United States to a com-*
12 *prehensive cooperative program to achieve improved*
13 *water quality in, and improvements in the produc-*
14 *tivity of living resources of, oceans, coastal, and Great*
15 *Lakes ecosystems.*

16 (4) *To authorize Regional Ocean Partnerships as*
17 *intergovernmental coordinators for shared regional*
18 *priorities among States and Indian Tribes relating to*
19 *the collaborative management of the large marine eco-*
20 *systems, thereby reducing duplication of efforts and*
21 *maximizing opportunities to leverage support in the*
22 *ocean and coastal regions.*

23 (5) *To empower States to take a lead role in*
24 *managing oceans, coastal, and Great Lakes areas.*

1 (6) *To incorporate rights of Indian Tribes in the*
 2 *management of oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes re-*
 3 *sources and provide resources to support Indian Tribe*
 4 *participation in and engagement with Regional*
 5 *Ocean Partnerships.*

6 (7) *To enable Regional Ocean Partnerships, or*
 7 *designated fiscal management entities of such part-*
 8 *nerships, to receive Federal funding to conduct the*
 9 *scientific research, conservation and restoration ac-*
 10 *tivities, and priority coordination on shared regional*
 11 *priorities necessary to achieve the purposes described*
 12 *in paragraphs (1) through (6).*

13 **SEC. 3. REGIONAL OCEAN PARTNERSHIPS.**

14 (a) *DEFINITIONS.—In this section:*

15 (1) *ADMINISTRATOR.—The term “Adminis-*
 16 *trator” means the Administrator of the National Oce-*
 17 *anic and Atmospheric Administration.*

18 (2) *COASTAL STATE.—The term “coastal state”*
 19 *has the meaning given that term in section 304 of the*
 20 *Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C.*
 21 *1453).*

22 (3) *INDIAN TRIBE.—The term “Indian Tribe”*
 23 *has the meaning given that term in section 4 of the*
 24 *Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance*
 25 *Act (25 U.S.C. 5304).*

1 (4) *REGIONAL OCEAN PARTNERSHIP*.—*The term*
 2 *“Regional Ocean Partnership” means a Regional*
 3 *Ocean Partnership, a Regional Coastal Partnership,*
 4 *or a Regional Great Lakes Partnership.*

5 (b) *REGIONAL OCEAN PARTNERSHIPS*.—

6 (1) *IN GENERAL*.—*A coastal state may partici-*
 7 *pate in a Regional Ocean Partnership with one or*
 8 *more—*

9 (A) *coastal states that share a common*
 10 *ocean or coastal area with the coastal state,*
 11 *without regard to whether the coastal states are*
 12 *contiguous; and*

13 (B) *States—*

14 (i) *with which the coastal state shares*
 15 *a common watershed; or*

16 (ii) *that would contribute to the prior-*
 17 *ities of the partnership.*

18 (2) *GREAT LAKES*.—*A partnership consisting of*
 19 *one or more coastal states bordering one or more of*
 20 *the Great Lakes may be known as a “Regional Coast-*
 21 *al Partnership” or a “Regional Great Lakes Partner-*
 22 *ship”.*

23 (3) *APPLICATION*.—*The Governor of a coastal*
 24 *state or the Governors of a group of coastal states*
 25 *may apply to the Secretary of Commerce, on behalf*

1 of a partnership, for the partnership to receive des-
 2 ignation as a Regional Ocean Partnership if the
 3 partnership—

4 (A) meets the requirements under para-
 5 graph (4); and

6 (B) submits an application for such des-
 7 ignation in such manner, in such form, and con-
 8 taining such information as the Secretary may
 9 require.

10 (4) REQUIREMENTS.—A partnership is eligible
 11 for designation as a Regional Ocean Partnership by
 12 the Secretary under paragraph (3) if the partner-
 13 ship—

14 (A) is established to coordinate the manage-
 15 ment of ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes re-
 16 sources among State governments and Indian
 17 Tribes;

18 (B) focuses on the environmental issues af-
 19 fecting the ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes areas
 20 of the members participating in the partnership;

21 (C) complements existing coastal and ocean
 22 management efforts of States and Indian Tribes
 23 on an interstate scale, focusing on shared re-
 24 gional priorities;

1 (D) does not have a regulatory function;
2 and

3 (E) is not duplicative of an existing Re-
4 gional Ocean Partnership designated under
5 paragraph (5), as determined by the Secretary.

6 (5) DESIGNATION OF CERTAIN ENTITIES AS RE-
7 GIONAL OCEAN PARTNERSHIPS.—Notwithstanding
8 paragraph (3) or (4), the following entities are des-
9 ignated as Regional Ocean Partnerships:

10 (A) The Gulf of Mexico Alliance, comprised
11 of the States of Alabama, Florida, Louisiana,
12 Mississippi, and Texas.

13 (B) The Northeast Regional Ocean Council,
14 comprised of the States of Maine, Vermont, New
15 Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and
16 Rhode Island.

17 (C) The Mid-Atlantic Regional Council on
18 the Ocean, comprised of the States of New York,
19 New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia.

20 (D) The West Coast Ocean Alliance, com-
21 prised of the States of California, Oregon, and
22 Washington and the coastal Indian Tribes there-
23 in.

24 (c) GOVERNING BODIES OF REGIONAL OCEAN PART-
25 NERSHIPS.—

1 (1) *IN GENERAL.*—*A Regional Ocean Partner-*
 2 *ship designated under subsection (b) shall have a gov-*
 3 *erning body.*

4 (2) *MEMBERSHIP.*—*A governing body described*
 5 *in paragraph (1)—*

6 *(A) shall be comprised, at a minimum, of*
 7 *voting members from each coastal state partici-*
 8 *pating in the Regional Ocean Partnership, des-*
 9 *ignated by the Governor of the coastal state; and*

10 *(B) may include such other members as the*
 11 *partnership considers appropriate.*

12 (d) *FUNCTIONS.*—*A Regional Ocean Partnership des-*
 13 *ignated under subsection (b) may perform the following*
 14 *functions:*

15 (1) *Promote coordination of the actions of the*
 16 *agencies of coastal states participating in the partner-*
 17 *ship with the actions of the appropriate officials of*
 18 *Federal agencies, State governments, and Indian*
 19 *Tribes in developing strategies—*

20 *(A) to conserve living resources, increase*
 21 *valuable habitats, enhance coastal resilience and*
 22 *ocean management, promote ecological and eco-*
 23 *nomic health, and address such other issues re-*
 24 *lated to the shared ocean, coastal, or Great Lakes*

1 *areas as are determined to be a shared, regional*
 2 *priority by those states; and*

3 *(B) to manage regional data portals and*
 4 *develop associated data products for purposes*
 5 *that support the priorities of the partnership.*

6 *(2) In cooperation with appropriate Federal and*
 7 *State agencies, Indian Tribes, and local authorities,*
 8 *develop and implement specific action plans to carry*
 9 *out coordination goals.*

10 *(3) Coordinate and implement priority plans*
 11 *and projects, and facilitate science, research, mod-*
 12 *eling, monitoring, data collection, and other activities*
 13 *that support the goals of the partnership through the*
 14 *provision of grants and contracts under subsection (f).*

15 *(4) Engage, coordinate, and collaborate with rel-*
 16 *evant governmental entities and stakeholders to ad-*
 17 *dress ocean and coastal related matters that require*
 18 *interagency or intergovernmental solutions.*

19 *(5) Implement outreach programs for public in-*
 20 *formation, education, and participation to foster*
 21 *stewardship of the resources of the ocean, coastal, and*
 22 *Great Lakes areas, as relevant.*

23 *(6) Develop and make available, through publi-*
 24 *cations, technical assistance, and other appropriate*
 25 *means, information pertaining to cross-jurisdictional*

1 *issues being addressed through the coordinated activi-*
 2 *ties of the partnership.*

3 *(7) Serve as a liaison with, and provide infor-*
 4 *mation to, international counterparts, as appropriate*
 5 *on priority issues for the partnership.*

6 *(e) COORDINATION, CONSULTATION, AND ENGAGE-*
 7 *MENT.—*

8 *(1) IN GENERAL.—A Regional Ocean Partner-*
 9 *ship designated under subsection (b) shall maintain*
 10 *mechanisms for coordination, consultation, and en-*
 11 *gagement with the following:*

12 *(A) The Federal Government.*

13 *(B) Indian Tribes.*

14 *(C) Nongovernmental entities, including*
 15 *academic organizations, nonprofit organizations,*
 16 *and private sector entities.*

17 *(D) Other federally mandated regional enti-*
 18 *ties, including the Regional Fishery Management*
 19 *Councils, the regional associations of the Na-*
 20 *tional Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation*
 21 *System, and relevant Marine Fisheries Commis-*
 22 *sions.*

23 *(2) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in para-*
 24 *graph (1)(B) may be construed as affecting any re-*
 25 *quirement to consult with Indian Tribes under Exec-*

1 *utive Order 13175 (25 U.S.C. 5301 note; relating to*
 2 *consultation and coordination with Indian tribal gov-*
 3 *ernments) or any other applicable law or policy.*

4 *(f) GRANTS AND CONTRACTS.—*

5 *(1) IN GENERAL.—A Regional Ocean Partner-*
 6 *ship designated under subsection (b) may, in coordi-*
 7 *nation with existing Federal and State management*
 8 *programs, from amounts made available to the part-*
 9 *nership by the Administrator or the head of another*
 10 *Federal agency, provide grants and enter into con-*
 11 *tracts for the purposes described in paragraph (2).*

12 *(2) PURPOSES.—The purposes described in this*
 13 *paragraph include any of the following:*

14 *(A) Monitoring the water quality and living*
 15 *resources of multi-State ocean and coastal eco-*
 16 *systems and coastal communities.*

17 *(B) Researching and addressing the effects*
 18 *of natural and human-induced environmental*
 19 *changes on—*

20 *(i) ocean and coastal ecosystems; and*

21 *(ii) coastal communities.*

22 *(C) Developing and executing cooperative*
 23 *strategies that—*

24 *(i) address regional data issues identi-*
 25 *fied by the partnership; and*

1 (ii) will result in more effective man-
2 agement of common ocean and coastal
3 areas.

4 (g) *REPORT REQUIRED.*—

5 (1) *IN GENERAL.*—Not later than 5 years after
6 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Adminis-
7 trator, in coordination with the Regional Ocean Part-
8 nerships designated under subsection (b), shall submit
9 to Congress a report on the partnerships.

10 (2) *REPORT REQUIREMENTS.*—The report re-
11 quired by paragraph (1) shall include the following:

12 (A) An assessment of the overall status of
13 the work of the Regional Ocean Partnerships des-
14 ignated under subsection (b).

15 (B) An assessment of the effectiveness of the
16 partnerships in supporting regional priorities
17 relating to the management of common ocean,
18 coastal, and Great Lakes areas.

19 (C) An assessment of the effectiveness of the
20 strategies that the partnerships are supporting
21 or implementing and the extent to which the pri-
22 ority needs of the regions covered by the partner-
23 ships are being met through such strategies.

24 (D) An assessment of how the efforts of the
25 partnerships support or enhance Federal and

1 *State efforts consistent with the purposes of this*
 2 *Act.*

3 *(E) Such recommendations as the Adminis-*
 4 *trator may have for improving—*

5 *(i) efforts of the partnerships to sup-*
 6 *port the purposes of this Act; and*

7 *(ii) collective strategies that support*
 8 *the purposes of this Act in coordination*
 9 *with all relevant Federal and State entities*
 10 *and Indian Tribes.*

11 *(F) The distribution of funds from each*
 12 *partnership for each fiscal year covered by the*
 13 *report.*

14 *(h) AVAILABILITY OF FEDERAL FUNDS.—In addition*
 15 *to amounts made available to the Regional Ocean Partner-*
 16 *ships designated under subsection (b) by the Administrator*
 17 *under this section, the head of any other Federal agency*
 18 *may provide grants to, enter into contracts with, or other-*
 19 *wise provide funding to such partnerships.*

20 *(i) AUTHORITIES.—Nothing in this section establishes*
 21 *any new legal or regulatory authority of the National Oce-*
 22 *anic and Atmospheric Administration or of the Regional*
 23 *Ocean Partnerships designated under subsection (b), other*
 24 *than—*

1 (1) *the authority of the Administrator to provide*
 2 *amounts to the partnerships; and*

3 (2) *the authority of the partnerships to provide*
 4 *grants and enter into contracts under subsection (f).*
 5 (j) *FUNDING.—*

6 (1) *REGIONAL OCEAN PARTNERSHIPS.—There*
 7 *are authorized to be appropriated to the National*
 8 *Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration the fol-*
 9 *lowing amounts to be made available to the Regional*
 10 *Ocean Partnerships designated under subsection (b)*
 11 *or designated fiscal management entities of such part-*
 12 *nerships to carry out activities of the partnerships*
 13 *under this Act:*

14 (A) *\$10,100,000 for fiscal year 2022.*

15 (B) *\$10,202,000 for fiscal year 2023.*

16 (C) *\$10,306,040 for fiscal year 2024.*

17 (D) *\$10,412,160 for fiscal year 2025.*

18 (E) *\$10,520,404 for fiscal year 2026.*

19 (2) *DISTRIBUTION OF AMOUNTS.—Amounts*
 20 *made available under paragraph (1) shall be divided*
 21 *evenly among the Regional Ocean Partnerships des-*
 22 *ignated under subsection (b).*

23 (3) *INDIAN TRIBE PARTICIPATION .—There is au-*
 24 *thorized to be appropriated to the National Oceanic*
 25 *and Atmospheric Administration \$1,000,000 for each*

1 *of fiscal years 2022 through 2026 for Indian Tribes*
2 *to be distributed for purposes of participation in or*
3 *engagement with the Regional Ocean Partnerships.*

4 *(4) DERIVATION.—Funds to carry out the activi-*
5 *ties under this Act shall be derived from amounts au-*
6 *thorized to be appropriated pursuant to paragraphs*
7 *(1) and (3) that are appropriated after the date of the*
8 *enactment of this Act.*

Calendar No. 217

117TH CONGRESS
1ST Session
S. 1894

A BILL

To designate Regional Ocean Partnerships of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and for other purposes.

DECEMBER 17, 2021
Reported with an amendment