

118TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# S. 4451

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## AN ACT

To require the Secretary of the Interior to enter into an agreement with the National Academy of Sciences to carry out a study on reservation systems for Federal land.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2       *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2       This Act may be cited as the “Review and Evaluation  
3 of Strategies for Equitable Reservations for Visitor Expe-  
4 riences Federal Land Act” or the “RESERVE Federal  
5 Land Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

7       In this Act:

8           (1) **BOOKING WINDOW.**—The term “booking  
9 window”, with respect to a Federal reservation sys-  
10 tem, means the time period during which a reserva-  
11 tion or lottery entry is available to the public.

12           (2) **FEDERAL LAND.**—The term “Federal land”  
13 means—

14           (A) public lands (as defined in section 103  
15 of the Federal Land Policy and Management  
16 Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1702));

17           (B) National Forest System land;

18           (C) units of the National Park System;

19           (D) units of the National Wildlife Refuge  
20 System;

21           (E) sites administered by the Bureau of  
22 Reclamation; and

23           (F) sites administered by the Corps of En-  
24 gineers.

25           (3) **FEDERAL RESERVATION SYSTEM.**—

1 (A) IN GENERAL.—The term “Federal res-  
 2 ervation system” means any platform or meth-  
 3 od used by managers of Federal land to manage  
 4 the quantity, type, distribution, and timing of  
 5 recreational activities.

6 (B) INCLUSIONS.—The term “Federal res-  
 7 ervation system” includes reservation, permit,  
 8 lottery, metering, pricing, merit-based, and  
 9 other similar management methods via online,  
 10 telephone, paper, in-person, or other methods.

11 (4) RECREATIONAL ACTIVITY.—The term “rec-  
 12 reational activity” includes camping, backpacking,  
 13 climbing, paddling sports, fishing, hiking, driving,  
 14 and other recreational opportunities.

15 (5) SECRETARIES.—The term “Secretaries”  
 16 means—

17 (A) the Secretary of the Interior;

18 (B) the Secretary of Agriculture; and

19 (C) the Secretary of the Army, acting  
 20 through the Chief of Engineers.

21 **SEC. 3. NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES STUDY OF FED-**  
 22 **ERAL RESERVATION SYSTEMS FOR REC-**  
 23 **REATIONAL ACTIVITIES ON FEDERAL LAND.**

24 (a) STUDY.—

1           (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretaries, acting  
 2 jointly, shall, not later than 60 days after the date  
 3 of enactment of this Act, enter into an agreement  
 4 with the National Academy of Sciences to carry out  
 5 a study of Federal reservation systems for rec-  
 6 reational activities on Federal land.

7           (2) REQUIREMENTS.—In carrying out the study  
 8 under paragraph (1), the National Academy of  
 9 Sciences shall consult with the Secretaries to carry  
 10 out the following:

11               (A) A review of the history of Federal res-  
 12 ervation systems, such as recreation.gov, includ-  
 13 ing a review of—

14                   (i) the considerations, including data,  
 15 that led to the establishment of the appli-  
 16 cable Federal reservation system;

17                   (ii) the iterations of the applicable  
 18 Federal reservation system over time to  
 19 meet the needs of the applicable Federal  
 20 agency;

21                   (iii) any visitor feedback provided with  
 22 respect to the applicable Federal reserva-  
 23 tion system; and

24                   (iv) scientific literature or studies ex-  
 25 amining the efficacy of Federal reservation

1 systems, including user preferences with  
2 respect to Federal reservation system de-  
3 sign and implementation.

4 (B) Based on available data and existing  
5 research, answer the following questions:

6 (i) What are the benefits and chal-  
7 lenges of implementing Federal reservation  
8 systems to achieve management goals for  
9 Federal land, including resource protec-  
10 tion, enjoyable visitor experiences, and sus-  
11 tainable operations and facility use?

12 (ii) What data are available, and what  
13 additional data are needed, to understand  
14 demand for recreation on Federal land?  
15 How can the data be used to balance vis-  
16 itor management and conservation goals?

17 (iii) What information is available re-  
18 garding Federal land users and Federal  
19 reservation system users? What informa-  
20 tion is available or needs to be collected re-  
21 garding demographics and characteristics  
22 of successful and unsuccessful applicants  
23 using the Federal reservation systems?

24 (iv) Do Federal reservation systems  
25 pose a barrier for certain communities, in-

cluding international communities, and user groups to access appropriate recreation opportunities on Federal land? If so, what is the nature of any barriers identified?

(v) What best practices should be considered in Federal reservation system design, including visitation management system options and booking windows, options to respond to the needs specific to individual Federal land management units, and equitable access to recreational activities? What metrics can be used to record outcomes of Federal reservation system design?

(vi) How have fees been collected for Federal reservation systems over time to meet the needs of the applicable Federal agency? How are the revenues from fees for Federal reservation systems split between, and spent by, Federal land units, Federal agencies, and third-party contractors? How is the fee structure disseminated to users? How could dissemination

1 of information with respect to the fee  
2 structure be improved?

3 (vii) What are the odds of success  
4 with respect to securing a reservation  
5 under Federal reservation systems? How  
6 are the odds of success disseminated to  
7 users? How could dissemination of infor-  
8 mation with respect to the odds of success  
9 be improved?

10 (viii) How are data, including data  
11 collected by contractors, on Federal res-  
12 ervation systems shared with Federal land  
13 managers, researchers, and the public?  
14 How can transparency be improved to in-  
15 form the decisionmaking of users of Fed-  
16 eral reservation systems?

17 (ix) How are Federal reservation sys-  
18 tems incorporating and adapting to emerg-  
19 ing technologies, such as geofencing, bots,  
20 or third-party websites monitoring and re-  
21 selling reservations? Are Federal reserva-  
22 tion systems resilient to cyber threats?

23 (x) How can Federal reservation sys-  
24 tems be improved to reduce “no shows”  
25 and ensure that recreation sites are being

1                   used during periods of high demand?  
2                   Would an increase in first-come, first-  
3                   served opportunities increase equitable ac-  
4                   cess to outdoor recreation on Federal land?

5       (b) REPORT.—The agreement entered into under  
6 subsection (a)(1) shall include a requirement that, not  
7 later than 18 months after the date on which the agree-  
8 ment is entered into, the National Academy of Sciences  
9 shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress  
10 a report that describes the results of the study carried out  
11 under that subsection.

Passed the Senate December 19 (legislative day, De-  
cember 16), 2024.

Attest:

*Secretary.*





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