

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 4953

To establish the Wildlife Movement and Movement Area Grant Program and the State and Tribal Migration Research Program, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

AUGUST 1, 2024

Mr. PADILLA introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Environment and Public Works

A BILL

To establish the Wildlife Movement and Movement Area Grant Program and the State and Tribal Migration Research 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 “Wildlife Movement
5 Through Partnerships Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. PURPOSE.**

7 The purpose of this Act is to provide financial and
8 technical assistance for the purposes of promoting

1 connectivity by improving habitat quality in movement
2 areas by migratory big game and other wildlife—

3 (1) to identify and conserve movement areas by
4 methods of science and management expertise em-
5 ployed by State and Tribal wildlife agencies and
6 other wildlife professionals; and

7 (2) to coordinate and advance the purposes
8 of—

9 (A) Secretarial Order 3362, entitled “Im-
10 proving Habitat Quality in Western Big-Game
11 Winter Range and Migration Corridors” and
12 issued by the Secretary on February 9, 2018;

13 (B) the wildlife crossings pilot program es-
14 tablished under section 171(b) of title 23,
15 United States Code; and

16 (C) the Migratory Big Game Initiative of
17 the Department of Agriculture.

18 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

19 In this Act:

20 (1) **BIG GAME.**—The term “big game” means
21 native species of large mammals, including deer, elk,
22 pronghorn, wild sheep, and moose, for which State
23 and Tribal wildlife agencies have established regu-
24 lated means and methods of take.

1 (2) CONNECTIVITY.—The term “connectivity”
2 means the degree to which a species of wildlife
3 moves within and among areas of its habitat.

4 (3) ELIGIBLE RECIPIENT.—The term “eligible
5 recipient” means—

6 (A) a State fish and wildlife agency or
7 other State agency responsible for managing
8 natural resources or wildlife;

9 (B) a State department of transportation;

10 (C) an Indian Tribe;

11 (D) a nonprofit organization described in
12 section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of
13 1986 and exempt from tax under section 501(a)
14 of such Code, or a coalition of those organiza-
15 tions, including an organization that represents
16 private landowners;

17 (E) an institution of higher education (as
18 defined in section 101(a) of the Higher Edu-
19 cation Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001(a)));

20 (F) a national or regional association rep-
21 resenting a State or Tribal fish and wildlife
22 agency;

23 (G) a Federal agency that may carry out
24 projects that would support the purpose of this
25 Act; and

1 (H) a county government.

2 (4) FEDERAL LAND.—The term “Federal land”
3 means land or water managed by the relevant agen-
4 cies.

5 (5) FOUNDATION.—The term “Foundation”
6 means the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
7 established by section 2(a) of the National Fish and
8 Wildlife Foundation Establishment Act (16 U.S.C.
9 3701(a)).

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

14 (7) MOVEMENT AREA.—The term “movement
15 area” means—

16 (A) an area wildlife frequently use, or
17 could frequently use, to move, including for
18 travel within, or colonization, of additional habi-
19 tat by wildlife that occurs seasonally or more
20 frequently in and around corridors; or

21 (B) seasonal habitat where migration or
22 other natural movement of big game and other
23 wildlife has been observed and documented
24 by—

- 1 (i) a State or Tribal wildlife agency;
2 or
3 (ii)(I) a scientific report published in
4 a peer-reviewed professional publication; or
5 (II) any other professional scientific
6 publication recognized by a State or Tribal
7 wildlife agency.

8 (8) RELEVANT AGENCIES.—The term “relevant
9 agencies” means—

10 (A) the Department of the Interior, includ-
11 ing the United States Fish and Wildlife Service,
12 the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Bureau of
13 Land Management, the National Park Service,
14 and the United States Geological Survey;

15 (B) the Department of Agriculture, includ-
16 ing the Forest Service, the Natural Resources
17 Conservation Service, and the Farm Service
18 Agency; and

19 (C) the Department of Transportation.

20 (9) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
21 the Secretary of the Interior.

22 (10) WILDLIFE.—The term “wildlife” means
23 native terrestrial vertebrate species.

1 **SEC. 4. WILDLIFE MOVEMENT AND MOVEMENT AREA**
2 **GRANT PROGRAM.**

3 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 180 days after
4 the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall es-
5 tablish a nonregulatory program, to be known as the
6 “Wildlife Movement and Movement Area Grant Program”
7 (referred to in this section as the “grant program”).

8 (b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the grant program is
9 to fund projects that improve or conserve habitat quality
10 in movement areas, including projects that—

11 (1) secure habitat leases, fence modification,
12 non-Federal land acquisition, conservation ease-
13 ments, improved hydrology, human-wildlife vehicle
14 collision reduction, and road and infrastructure
15 modification;

16 (2) arrange voluntary collaboration with land-
17 owners; and

18 (3) coordinate efforts among State and Tribal
19 governments, including departments of transpor-
20 tation and other relevant agencies.

21 (c) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT.—Not later than 1
22 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary
23 shall enter into a cooperative agreement with the Founda-
24 tion to administer the grant program for purposes of pro-
25 viding competitive matching grants in varying amounts to
26 eligible recipients.

1 (d) GRANTS.—

2 (1) PROPOSALS.—

3 (A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180
4 days after the date on which amounts are made
5 available to carry out the grant program, and
6 not less frequently than annually thereafter, the
7 Foundation, in consultation with the Secretary,
8 shall issue a request for proposals for projects
9 to fund under the grant program.

10 (B) REQUIREMENTS.—A proposal sub-
11 mitted to the Foundation by an eligible recipi-
12 ent for funding under the grant program shall
13 identify 1 or more movement areas where habi-
14 tat improvement will be achieved, subject to the
15 condition that the proposal shall include written
16 acknowledgment of support from a State or
17 Tribal fish and wildlife agency with jurisdiction
18 over the movement area in which the proposal
19 will be carried out.

20 (2) COST SHARING.—

21 (A) FEDERAL SHARE.—Except as provided
22 in subparagraph (C), the Federal share of the
23 cost of a project funded under the grant pro-
24 gram shall not exceed 90 percent of the total
25 cost of the project.

1 (B) NON-FEDERAL SHARE.—The non-Fed-
 2 eral share of the cost of a project funded under
 3 the grant program—

4 (i) except as provided in subparagraph
 5 (C), shall be not less than 10 percent of
 6 the total cost of the project; and

7 (ii) may be provided in cash or in-
 8 kind, as determined by the Foundation.

9 (C) WAIVER.—The Foundation may waive
 10 the requirements under subparagraphs (A) and
 11 (B) for projects that would benefit Indian
 12 Tribes, historically disadvantaged communities,
 13 or areas of persistent poverty, as determined by
 14 the Foundation.

15 (e) REQUIREMENT.—After the date on which the Sec-
 16 retary enters into a cooperative agreement with the Foun-
 17 dation under subsection (c), any amounts received by the
 18 Foundation under this section shall be subject to the Na-
 19 tional Fish and Wildlife Foundation Establishment Act
 20 (16 U.S.C. 3701 et seq.), excluding section 10(a) of that
 21 Act (16 U.S.C. 3709(a)).

22 (f) PRIORITY.—In funding projects under the grant
 23 program, the Foundation may give priority to proposals
 24 that are—

1 (1) submitted by an eligible recipient described
2 in section 3(3)(F); or

3 (2) jointly submitted by multiple eligible recipi-
4 ents.

5 (g) FUNDING.—After the date on which the Secretary
6 enters into a cooperative agreement with the Foundation
7 under subsection (c), the Foundation shall—

8 (1)(A) for each fiscal year, receive amounts
9 made available to carry out the grant program in an
10 advance payment of the entire amount on October 1,
11 or as soon as practicable thereafter, of that fiscal
12 year, to remain available until expended; and

13 (B) invest and reinvest those amounts for the
14 benefit of the grant program; and

15 (2) otherwise administer the grant program to
16 support partnerships between the public and private
17 sectors in accordance with this section.

18 (h) REPORT.—Not less frequently than once every 2
19 years, the Foundation shall submit to the Secretary, the
20 Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of Transportation,
21 and Congress a report on projects funded under the grant
22 program and the contribution of those projects to con-
23 servation successes.

24 (i) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be
2 appropriated to the Secretary to carry out the grant
3 program such sums as are necessary for each of fis-
4 cal years 2025 through 2030.

5 (2) BIG GAME.—Of the amounts made available
6 to carry out the grant program for each fiscal year,
7 not less than 50 percent shall be used for projects
8 that directly conserve, restore, or enhance big game
9 movement areas.

10 **SEC. 5. STATE AND TRIBAL MIGRATION RESEARCH PRO-**
11 **GRAM.**

12 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 180 days after
13 the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall es-
14 tablish a program, to be known as the “State and Tribal
15 Migration Research Program” (referred to in this section
16 as the “program”), to provide funds directly to State fish
17 and wildlife agencies and Indian Tribes through an agreed
18 on process between States, Indian Tribes, and the relevant
19 agencies, to collect and analyze data on the identification,
20 characteristics, or management of movement areas.

21 (b) ADMINISTRATION.—Funds provided under this
22 section shall be administered by the Science Applications
23 program of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

24 (c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
25 are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary to carry

1 out the program such sums as are necessary for each of
2 fiscal years 2025 through 2030.

3 **SEC. 6. PARTNERS FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE PROGRAM.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 4 of the Partners for Fish
5 and Wildlife Act (16 U.S.C. 3773) is amended—

6 (1) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by
7 striking “The Secretary shall carry out the Partners
8 for Fish and Wildlife Program” and inserting the
9 following:

10 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall carry out
11 the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program (referred to
12 in this section as the ‘Program’); and

13 (2) by adding at the end the following:

14 “(b) USE OF FUNDS.—Where prudent and necessary,
15 funds under the Program may be used to provide technical
16 assistance to other Federal agencies to implement vol-
17 untary programs with a focus on migration corridor or
18 seasonal habitat conservation efforts on private and Tribal
19 land.”.

20 (b) REAUTHORIZATION.—Section 5 of the Partners
21 for Fish and Wildlife Act (16 U.S.C. 3774) is amended
22 by striking “2019 through 2023” and inserting “2025
23 through 2030”.

1 **SEC. 7. USGS WILDLIFE COORIDOR MAPPING.**

2 The Secretary, acting through the Director of the
3 United States Geological Survey, shall support the con-
4 tinuation of a Corridor Mapping Team to provide technical
5 assistance, as prioritized and required by States and In-
6 dian Tribes, to Federal agencies, States, and Indian
7 Tribes working—

8 (1) to map movement areas using existing Glob-
9 al Positioning System data or other sources of cred-
10 ible scientific information; and

11 (2) to assess or research movement areas.

12 **SEC. 8. USGS EXISTING EFFORTS.**

13 (a) USGS EXISTING EFFORTS.—

14 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Director of the United
15 States Geological Survey shall work with Federal
16 and State agencies and Indian Tribes to build on ex-
17 isting efforts to map movement areas.

18 (2) PROTECTION OF INFORMATION.—In car-
19 rying out this subsection, the Director of the United
20 States Geological Survey, in cooperation with Fed-
21 eral and State agencies and Indian Tribes, and con-
22 sistent with rights afforded to sovereign nations and
23 applicable State law, shall carry out necessary meas-
24 ures—

25 (A) to protect sensitive information with
26 respect to the protection of private property

1 rights and the precise locations of individuals;
2 and

3 (B) to prevent the poaching, illegal taking,
4 and unfair chase of wildlife.

5 (3) REPORTS; PUBLISHED MIGRATION MAPS.—

6 (A) IN GENERAL.—Annually, the Director
7 of the United States Geological Survey shall
8 publish a report on completed analyses of
9 mapped migration corridors, seasonal habitats,
10 and connectivity areas.

11 (B) REQUIREMENT.—To the extent prac-
12 ticable, all efforts shall be made to incorporate
13 data with existing State programs and use ex-
14 isting published maps described in subpara-
15 graph (A).

16 (4) REPORTS.—Not less frequently than once
17 every 2 years, the Secretary shall submit to Con-
18 gress a report on projects funded under this sub-
19 section, including a description of the conservation
20 value of each project.

21 (b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section
22 2 of the Act of September 2, 1960 (16 U.S.C. 753b), is
23 amended to read as follows:

1 **“SEC. 2. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

2 “(a) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be ap-
3 propriated to carry out this Act such sums as are nec-
4 essary for each of fiscal years 2025 through 2030.

5 “(b) SET-ASIDE.—Of the amounts made available to
6 carry out this Act for each fiscal year, not less than 50
7 percent shall be used for projects that promote
8 connectivity by improving habitat quality in movement
9 areas of big game and other wildlife.”.

10 **SEC. 9. COORDINATION.**

11 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall appoint a
12 Senior Executive Service employee, who has experience
13 with big game movement, to serve in the Office of the Sec-
14 retary as coordinator of activities and necessary staff to
15 carry out this Act and the amendments made by this Act.

16 (b) AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Sen-
17 ior Executive Service employee appointed under subsection
18 (a) shall—

19 (1) advise and assist—

20 (A) State and Tribal agencies and other el-
21 igible recipients;

22 (B) relevant Federal agencies and pro-
23 grams; and

24 (C) the Foundation; and

1 (2) maintain an informative summary of activi-
2 ties, and the results of those activities, carried out
3 under this Act.

4 (c) INTERAGENCY COORDINATION.—The Secretaries,
5 or their authorized representatives, of the relevant agen-
6 cies shall regularly convene—

7 (1) to coordinate actions and funding across
8 Federal agencies for programs under this Act and
9 the amendments made by this Act; and

10 (2) to streamline coordination with States, In-
11 dian Tribes, and non-governmental partners with re-
12 spect to those actions and that funding.

13 (d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
14 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
15 such sums as are necessary for each of fiscal years 2025
16 through 2030.

17 **SEC. 10. REQUIREMENT; SAVINGS PROVISION.**

18 (a) REQUIREMENT.—No funds obligated under this
19 Act or an amendment made by this Act shall be applied
20 in a manner that requires non-voluntary changes in agri-
21 cultural or domestic livestock production, permitted for-
22 estry practices, or access to valid existing rights, such as
23 for energy development and mining, or water rights, con-
24 sistent with Federal organic Acts and associated regula-
25 tions.

1 (b) SAVINGS PROVISION.—Nothing in this Act or an
2 amendment made by this Act—

3 (1) enlarges or diminishes the authority, juris-
4 diction, or responsibility of a State to manage, con-
5 trol, or regulate fish and wildlife under the law and
6 regulations of the State on land and waters within
7 the State, including on Federal land;

8 (2) modifies or abrogates a treaty with any In-
9 dian Tribe or enlarges or diminishes the authority,
10 jurisdiction, or responsibility of an Indian Tribe to
11 manage, control, or regulate wildlife on Tribal land;

12 (3) impacts the private property or privacy
13 rights of landowners;

14 (4) restricts or reduces public access for hunt-
15 ing, angling, recreational shooting, or other compat-
16 ible types of outdoor recreation;

17 (5) affects military readiness for training occur-
18 ring on land of the Department of the Interior re-
19 served by the Department of the Defense;

20 (6) constitutes a Federal land designation or
21 federally designated migration route, an alteration
22 or removal of such a designation, or a directive to
23 impact pre-existing administrative or management
24 authority in any manner; or

1 (7) amends or otherwise affects any other Fed-
2 eral law (including regulations) relating to the con-
3 servation of native species.

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