

104TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 2939

To direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a pilot test of the
Mississippi Interstate Cooperative Resource Agreement.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 1, 1996

Mr. GUNDERSON (for himself and Mr. BEREUTER) introduced the following
bill; which was referred to the Committee on Resources

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a pilot
test of the Mississippi Interstate Cooperative Resource
Agreement.

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 “Mississippi Interstate
5 Cooperative Resource Agreement Act of 1996”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 The Congress finds that—

8 (1) several rivers flow between, or are common
9 to, two or more State boundaries;

1 (2) in many cases, there is not a single entity
2 which has complete jurisdictional responsibility for
3 the fishery resources in these rivers;

4 (3) a strong partnership between Federal and
5 State governmental authorities and citizen groups is
6 vital in coordinating and facilitating cooperative re-
7 search and in resolving problems associated with
8 large river ecosystems;

9 (4) many fishery management problems are
10 caused by federally regulated activities (including ac-
11 tivities resulting in point and nonpoint pollution)
12 and federally constructed projects (including dams
13 and navigation facilities);

14 (5) in some rivers, the once rich assemblages of
15 fish fauna and diverse habitats have been lost and
16 formerly abundant native fish now exist only as en-
17 dangered or depleted populations;

18 (6) without positive management actions, native
19 species in some rivers will continue to decline, foster-
20 ing even greater conflicts among water users;

21 (7) construction of waterway developments (in-
22 cluding navigation, flood control, water level fluctua-
23 tion, power generation, irrigation, and general water
24 depletion projects) is accelerating and increasingly
25 degrading large river ecosystems nationwide;

1 (8) the United States public will face reduced
2 opportunities for recreational, commercial, subsist-
3 ence, and aesthetic uses of river systems without de-
4 monstrable change in management strategies in the
5 near future;

6 (9) several programs have been proposed or are
7 underway to resolve conflicts in these management
8 strategies;

9 (10) in one of these programs, Federal, State,
10 and local fishery resource managers in the Mis-
11 sissippi River drainage basin have entered into the
12 Mississippi Interstate Cooperative Resource Agree-
13 ment under which the managers share information,
14 resources, facilities, and funding for preparation, de-
15 velopment, and implementation of long-range strate-
16 gic plans for management of the drainage basin's
17 interjurisdictional fishery resources;

18 (11) the Mississippi Interstate Cooperative Re-
19 source Agreement merits detailed evaluation as a
20 model for the development of long-range strategic
21 plans for the management of interjurisdictional riv-
22 ers fishery resources; and

23 (12) to ensure that these programs are appro-
24 priately coordinated and to conserve the fishery re-
25 sources in interjurisdictional rivers, there is a need

1 for strategies to improve coordination, cooperation,
2 research, and information sharing.

3 **SEC. 3. MISSISSIPPI INTERSTATE COOPERATIVE RE-**
4 **SOURCE AGREEMENT.**

5 (a) EVALUATION.—The Secretary, in cooperation
6 with the Mississippi Interstate Cooperative Resource Asso-
7 ciation, shall conduct a pilot test of the Mississippi Inter-
8 state Cooperative Resource Agreement.

9 (b) CONTENTS.—A pilot test conducted under this
10 section may include, among other matters, the following:

11 (1) Identification and description of each of the
12 river ecosystems of the Mississippi River drainage
13 system and the associated fishery resources and fish
14 habitats of such river ecosystems.

15 (2) Identification and description of—

16 (A) the known impacts, on fishery re-
17 sources of the Mississippi River drainage basin,
18 of agriculture, navigation, flood control, power
19 generation, irrigation, and municipal water sup-
20 ply projects, including the impacts of nonpoint
21 source pollution, dredging, channel mainte-
22 nance, water level management, sediment and
23 contaminant transport, vessel traffic, water
24 withdrawal, and changes in salinity and various
25 hydrologic conditions; and

1 (B) techniques for mitigating those im-
2 pacts.

3 (3) Analysis of existing resource data with re-
4 gard to regional depletion of important fish stocks
5 (including paddlefish, lake sturgeon, walleye, and
6 other high priority nonanadromous species) and the
7 potential for restoration of such fish stocks.

8 (4) Identification of major information gaps
9 and technological needs to improve the cooperative
10 management of interjurisdictional fishery resources.

11 (5) A comprehensive study of the status, and
12 the management, research, and restoration needs, of
13 the interjurisdictional fishery resources of the Mis-
14 sissippi River drainage system.

15 (6) Development of recommendations regarding
16 the scope, schedule, regional priorities, and roles of
17 participants in the Mississippi Interstate Cooperative
18 Resource Agreement for undertaking cooperative
19 management and research projects.

20 (7) Development of plans and testing projects
21 for the restoration and enhancement of depleted fish
22 stocks (including lake sturgeon, paddlefish, walleye,
23 and other high priority nonanadromous species) and
24 associated habitats of such fish stocks.

1 (8) Evaluation of the feasibility and expected
2 success of the program under the Mississippi Inter-
3 state Cooperative Resource Agreement and the mer-
4 its of extending such program of cooperative man-
5 agement strategy to other interjurisdictional river
6 basins in the United States.

7 (9) Estimates of funds required to implement
8 recommendations and plans developed under para-
9 graphs (6), (7), and (8).

10 (c) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 36
11 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the
12 Secretary shall transmit to the Congress a report contain-
13 ing the evaluation of the pilot test to be conducted under
14 this section.

15 **SEC. 4. PAYMENT OF ASSISTANCE.**

16 The Secretary may use amounts available to carry
17 out this Act to pay assistance to the Mississippi Interstate
18 Cooperative Resource Association, for costs it incurs in
19 participating in the pilot test under section 3.

20 **SEC. 5. DEFINITIONS.**

21 For the purpose of this Act, the following definitions
22 apply:

23 (1) INTERJURISDICTIONAL FISHERY RE-
24 SOURCES.—The term “interjurisdictional fishery re-
25 sources” means fishery resources and associated

1 aquatic habitats that depend on interjurisdictional
2 rivers and are under the management of two or
3 more governmental entities.

4 (2) INTERJURISDICTIONAL RIVER.—The term
5 “interjurisdictional river” means a river that flows
6 along the boundary of, or is common to, two or more
7 States.

8 (3) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
9 the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Di-
10 rector of the United States Fish and Wildlife Serv-
11 ice.

12 (4) STATE FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCY.—The
13 term “State Fish and Wildlife Agency” includes any
14 State department or agency, or a part thereof, that
15 is empowered under the laws of the State to exercise
16 the functions ordinarily exercised by a State fish and
17 wildlife agency.

18 (5) THE MISSISSIPPI INTERSTATE COOPERA-
19 TIVE RESOURCE ASSOCIATION.—The term “Mis-
20 sissippi Interstate Cooperative Resource Associa-
21 tion” means the association comprised of the States
22 and entities that are signatories to the Mississippi
23 Interstate Cooperative Resource Agreement.

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