

One Hundred Eighth Congress
of the
United States of America

AT THE FIRST SESSION

*Begun and held at the City of Washington on Tuesday,
the seventh day of January, two thousand and three*

An Act

To provide for the eradication and control of nutria in Maryland and Louisiana.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of
the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Nutria Eradication and Control Act of 2003”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.

(a) FINDINGS.—The Congress finds the following:

(1) Wetlands and tidal marshes of the Chesapeake Bay and in Louisiana provide significant cultural, economic, and ecological benefits to the Nation.

(2) The South American nutria (*Myocastor coypus*) is directly contributing to substantial marsh loss in Maryland and Louisiana on Federal, State, and private land.

(3) Traditional harvest methods to control or eradicate nutria have failed in Maryland and have had limited success in the eradication of nutria in Louisiana. Consequently, marsh loss is accelerating.

(4) The nutria eradication and control pilot program authorized by Public Law 105–322 is to develop new and effective methods for eradication of nutria.

(b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this Act is to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to provide financial assistance to the State of Maryland and the State of Louisiana for a program to implement measures to eradicate or control nutria and restore marshland damaged by nutria.

SEC. 3. NUTRIA ERADICATION PROGRAM.

(a) GRANT AUTHORITY.—The Secretary of the Interior (in this Act referred to as the “Secretary”), subject to the availability of appropriations, may provide financial assistance to the State of Maryland and the State of Louisiana for a program to implement measures to eradicate or control nutria and restore marshland damaged by nutria.

(b) GOALS.—The goals of the program shall be to—

(1) eradicate nutria in Maryland;

(2) eradicate or control nutria in Louisiana and other States; and

(3) restore marshland damaged by nutria.

(c) ACTIVITIES.—In the State of Maryland, the Secretary shall require that the program consist of management, research, and

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public education activities carried out in accordance with the document published by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service entitled “Eradication Strategies for Nutria in the Chesapeake and Delaware Bay Watersheds”, dated March 2002.

(d) COST SHARING.—

(1) FEDERAL SHARE.—The Federal share of the costs of the program may not exceed 75 percent of the total costs of the program.

(2) IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS.—The non-Federal share of the costs of the program may be provided in the form of in-kind contributions of materials or services.

(e) LIMITATION ON ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.—Not more than 5 percent of financial assistance provided by the Secretary under this section may be used for administrative expenses.

(f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—For financial assistance under this section, there is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary \$4,000,000 for the State of Maryland program and \$2,000,000 for the State of Louisiana program for each of fiscal years 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2008.

SEC. 4. REPORT.

No later than 6 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary and the National Invasive Species Council shall—

(1) give consideration to the 2002 report for the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries titled “Nutria in Louisiana”, and the 2002 document entitled “Eradication Strategies for Nutria in the Chesapeake and Delaware Bay Watersheds”; and

(2) develop, in cooperation with the State of Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries and the State of Maryland Department of Natural Resources, a long-term nutria control or eradication program, as appropriate, with the objective to significantly reduce and restore the damage nutria cause to coastal wetlands in the States of Louisiana and Maryland.

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

*Vice President of the United States and
President of the Senate.*