

114TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 5771

To reauthorize the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 13, 2016

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN (for herself, Mr. CURBELO of Florida, Mrs. RADEWAGEN, and Mr. PIERLUISI) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committees on Science, Space, and Technology, and the Judiciary, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To reauthorize the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000, 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; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

4 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the
5 “Conserving Our Reefs and Livelihoods Act of 2016”.

6 (b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for
7 this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
Sec. 2. Findings.

Sec. 3. Amendment of Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000.

Sec. 4. Definitions.

TITLE I—AMENDMENTS TO THE CORAL REEF CONSERVATION
ACT

Sec. 101. Expansion of coral reef conservation program.

Sec. 102. National program.

Sec. 103. Report to Congress.

Sec. 104. Renaming of fund.

Sec. 105. Vessel grounding inventory; agreements; regulations; application in accordance with international law.

Sec. 106. Amendments to definitions.

Sec. 107. National coral reef action strategy.

Sec. 108. Emergency assistance.

Sec. 109. Prize competitions to promote innovation in coral reef research and conservation.

TITLE II—UNITED STATES CORAL REEF TASK FORCE

Sec. 201. United States Coral Reef Task Force.

TITLE III—DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR CORAL REEF
AUTHORITIES

Sec. 301. Coral reef conservation and restoration assistance.

Sec. 302. National Park Service fishing access restrictions in State and territorial marine waters.

TITLE IV—MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

Sec. 401. Stock assessments under Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.

Sec. 402. Lionfish.

Sec. 403. Billfish conservation.

1 SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

2 Congress finds the following:

3 (1) Coral reefs are an important natural re-
4 source that provide ecosystem goods and services, in-
5 cluding high levels of biodiversity, the provision of
6 seafood and medicinal compounds, coastal surge pro-
7 tection and shoreline stabilization, recreational op-
8 portunities, and the retention of cultural and tradi-
9 tional lifestyles and practices, all of which are of

1 enormous economic and environmental benefits to
2 the United States.

3 (2) Coral reef conservation and restoration are
4 in the national interest of the United States and its
5 citizens.

6 (3) Scientific research suggests that the health
7 and functioning of coral reef ecosystems may be re-
8 duced by direct human impacts, deteriorating water
9 quality, changing ocean conditions including warm-
10 ing seas and ocean acidification, invasive species,
11 coral bleaching, and coral diseases.

12 (4) Due to the complex nature of coral reef eco-
13 systems, more research is needed to understand
14 their structure and function, and their response to
15 natural and human disturbance.

16 (5) Basic and applied research conducted by
17 academic and nonprofit research institutions, Fed-
18 eral agencies, and State, local, and territorial agen-
19 cies is indispensable to understanding, conserving,
20 and restoring coral reefs and coral reef ecosystems.

21 (6) Coral reef restoration is essential for the ef-
22 fective conservation and recovery of coral reef eco-
23 systems, and innovative tools, technologies, and
24 strategies to aid these efforts are desperately need-
25 ed.

1 (7) Artificial reefs are not an adequate replace-
2 ment for lost or degraded coral reefs but may pro-
3 vide benefits to coral reef ecosystems and local com-
4 munities in certain contexts.

5 (8) Extensive public involvement and con-
6 sensus-based cooperation and consultation between
7 Federal agencies, State, local, and territorial agen-
8 cies, academic and nonprofit research institutions,
9 coral reef-dependent businesses, and coral reef-fo-
10 cused nongovernmental organizations, are essential
11 to furthering the conservation and restoration of
12 coral reef and coral reef ecosystems and ensure bal-
13 anced economic and environmental benefits for the
14 American people.

15 (9) The development and implementation of
16 Marine Reserve fishing closures for the purpose of
17 coral reef conservation should represent a last-resort
18 option for Federal resource managers, unless they—

19 (A) are developed and implemented
20 through extensive public involvement by local
21 citizens and consensus-based cooperation and
22 consultation between Federal agencies, affected
23 State, local, and territorial agencies, locally
24 knowledgeable academic and nonprofit research
25 institutions, locally affected coral reef-depend-

1 ent businesses, and locally operating coral reef-
2 focused nongovernmental organizations;

3 (B) are based on rigorous scientific evi-
4 dence; and

5 (C) feature an adaptive management ap-
6 proach with clearly identifiable, measurable,
7 science-based goals.

8 (10) The rapid decline of coral reefs in the last
9 four decades, both in the United States and globally,
10 is unsustainable and requires urgent, renewed atten-
11 tion toward understanding, conserving, and restoring
12 coral reefs.

13 **SEC. 3. AMENDMENT OF CORAL REEF CONSERVATION ACT**
14 **OF 2000.**

15 Except as otherwise expressly provided, whenever in
16 this Act an amendment or repeal is expressed in terms
17 of an amendment to or repeal of a section or other provi-
18 sion, the reference shall be considered to be made to a
19 section or other provision of the Coral Reef Conservation
20 Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 6401 et seq.).

21 **SEC. 4. DEFINITIONS.**

22 The definitions in section 210 of the Coral Reef Con-
23 servation Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 6401 et seq.), as amend-
24 ed by this Act, shall apply in this Act.

1 **TITLE I—AMENDMENTS TO THE**
2 **CORAL REEF CONSERVATION**
3 **ACT**

4 **SEC. 101. EXPANSION OF CORAL REEF CONSERVATION**
5 **PROGRAM.**

6 (a) PROJECT DIVERSITY.—Section 204(d) (16
7 U.S.C. 6403(d)) is amended—

8 (1) in the heading, by striking “GEOGRAPHIC
9 AND BIOLOGICAL” and inserting “PROJECT”; and

10 (2) by striking paragraph (3) and inserting the
11 following:

12 “(3) Remaining funds shall be awarded for
13 time-sensitive projects that warrant immediate re-
14 lease of funds for research activities to detect, meas-
15 ure, and analyze, prevent, or respond to, emerging
16 threats and emergencies, including—

17 “(A) bleaching or mortality events;

18 “(B) disease outbreaks; and

19 “(C) invasive species outbreaks.”.

20 (b) APPLICANTS SEEKING IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF
21 FUNDS.—Section 204(f) (16 U.S.C. 6403(f)) is amended
22 by adding at the end the following:

23 “(3) APPLICANTS SEEKING IMMEDIATE RE-
24 LEASE OF FUNDS.—If an applicant for assistance
25 under this section seeks an immediate release of

1 such assistance to study or respond to an emerging
2 threat or emergency, the Administrator—

3 “(A) shall by not later than 15 days after
4 the date of receipt of the application for assist-
5 ance, conduct a preliminary review of the pro-
6 posed project and determine whether it qualifies
7 for such a release; and

8 “(B) if the project so qualifies, may—

9 “(i) immediately release up to 50 per-
10 cent of the total amount of assistance for
11 which the Administrator estimates the
12 project will qualify; and

13 “(ii) release the remainder of the total
14 amount for which the project qualifies
15 after providing written notification of ap-
16 proval of the project in accordance with
17 paragraph (2)(D).”.

18 (c) APPROVAL CRITERIA.—Section 204(g) (16 U.S.C.
19 6403(g)) is amended by striking paragraphs (9) and (10)
20 and inserting the following:

21 “(9) understanding the factors that contribute
22 to coral diseases, and the prevention and treatment
23 of coral diseases;

1 “(10) developing innovative invasive species
2 capture, collection, removal, and trapping methods
3 for use around coral reefs;

4 “(11) developing and implementing cost-effec-
5 tive methods to restore degraded coral reef eco-
6 systems and to create native coral reef ecosystems in
7 suitable waters, with an emphasis on novel restora-
8 tion strategies and techniques to advance coral reef
9 recovery and growth in regions threatened by rising
10 sea levels and storm surge;

11 “(12) understanding and cataloging coral ge-
12 netic diversity, including research into traits that
13 promote resilience, especially to warming sea tem-
14 peratures, ocean acidification, coral bleaching, coral
15 diseases, and invasive species, and applying such re-
16 search to coral reef restoration efforts;

17 “(13) developing in situ native coral propaga-
18 tion sites for use in coral reef restoration projects;

19 “(14) developing networks of ex situ coral prop-
20 agation nurseries for conservation including genetic
21 banking, captive breeding of rare species, and cap-
22 tive breeding of coral populations resilient to stress
23 from warming sea temperatures, ocean acidification,
24 coral bleaching, and coral diseases for use in coral
25 reef restoration projects;

1 “(15) developing ‘reef-safe’ sunscreen products;

2 “(16) developing networks of improved, real-
3 time water quality monitoring along coral reefs im-
4 pacted by agriculture or urban development;

5 “(17) developing improved, real-time reef moni-
6 toring methods and protocols for coastal construc-
7 tion and dredging projects with direct or indirect
8 coral reef impacts, including improved standards for
9 sediment deposition and turbidity measurements;

10 “(18) promoting ecologically sound navigation
11 and anchorages, including mooring buoy systems,
12 near coral reefs;

13 “(19) promoting and assisting entities to work
14 with local communities, and all appropriate govern-
15 mental and nongovernmental organizations, to sup-
16 port consensus-driven, community-based planning
17 and management initiatives for the protection of
18 coral reef ecosystems; and

19 “(20) implementing research and restoration
20 projects that help ensure the population viability of
21 listed coral species in United States waters as de-
22 tailed in the population-based recovery criteria in-
23 cluded in species-specific recovery plans consistent
24 with the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16
25 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.).”.

1 **SEC. 102. NATIONAL PROGRAM.**

2 (a) PURPOSE OF ACT.—Section 202 (16 U.S.C.
3 6401) is amended—

4 (1) by redesignating paragraphs (2) through
5 (6) as paragraphs (3) through (7), respectively, and
6 by inserting after paragraph (1) the following:

7 “(2) to promote the resilience of coral reef eco-
8 systems, especially with respect to warming sea tem-
9 peratures, ocean acidification, coral bleaching, coral
10 diseases, and invasive species;”;

11 (2) by amending paragraph (4), as so redesign-
12 nated, to read as follows:

13 “(4) to develop sound scientific information on
14 the condition of coral reef ecosystems and the
15 threats to such ecosystems including warming sea
16 temperatures, coral bleaching, coral diseases, and
17 ocean acidification, to benefit local communities and
18 the Nation, and to the extent practicable to support
19 and enhance management and research capabilities
20 at local management agencies and local research and
21 academic institutions;”;

22 (3) by amending paragraph (5), as so redesign-
23 nated, to read as follows:

24 “(5) to assist in the preservation of coral reefs
25 by supporting consensus-driven conservation and
26 restoration programs, including those that involve

1 affected local communities, businesses, and non-
2 governmental organizations;” and

3 (4) by striking paragraph (7), as so redesign-
4 nated, and inserting the following:

5 “(7) to recognize the benefits of healthy coral
6 reefs to island and coastal communities and to en-
7 courage Federal, State, territorial, and local commu-
8 nity cooperation to ensure, to the maximum extent
9 practicable, the continued availability of those bene-
10 fits.”.

11 (b) AMENDMENTS RELATING TO ACTIVITIES TO
12 CONSERVE CORAL REEFS AND CORAL REEF ECO-
13 SYSTEMS.—Section 207(b) (16 U.S.C. 6406(b)) is amend-
14 ed—

15 (1) in paragraph (3) by striking “and” after
16 the semicolon;

17 (2) in paragraph (4)—

18 (A) by striking “cooperative conservation
19 and management” and inserting “cooperative
20 research, conservation, management, and res-
21 toration”; and

22 (B) by striking “partners.” and inserting
23 “partners, including academic institutions lo-
24 cated in States and United States territories;
25 and”; and

1 (3) by adding at the end the following:

2 “(5) improving and promoting the resilience of
3 coral reefs, especially to warming sea temperatures,
4 ocean acidification, coral bleaching, coral diseases,
5 and invasive species.”.

6 **SEC. 103. REPORT TO CONGRESS.**

7 Section 208 (16 U.S.C. 6407) is amended to read as
8 follows:

9 **“SEC. 208. REPORT TO CONGRESS.**

10 “Not later than March 1, 2017, and every 5 years
11 thereafter, the Administrator shall submit to the Com-
12 mittee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the
13 Senate and the Committee on Natural Resources of the
14 House of Representatives a report describing all activities
15 undertaken to implement the strategy, including—

16 “(1) a description of the funds obligated by
17 each participating Federal agency to advance coral
18 reef conservation and restoration during each fiscal
19 year of the 5-fiscal-year period preceding the fiscal
20 year in which the report is submitted;

21 “(2) a description of Federal interagency and
22 cooperative efforts with States, United States terri-
23 tories, and nongovernmental partner organizations
24 to prevent or address overharvesting, coastal runoff,
25 or other anthropogenic impacts on coral reef eco-

1 systems, including projects undertaken with the De-
2 partment of the Interior, the Department of Agri-
3 culture, the Department of Transportation, the En-
4 vironmental Protection Agency, and the Army Corps
5 of Engineers;

6 “(3) a summary of the information contained in
7 the vessel grounding inventory established under sec-
8 tion 210, including additional authorization or fund-
9 ing, needed for response and removal of such vessels;

10 “(4) a description of Federal disaster response
11 actions taken pursuant to the National Response
12 Plan to address damage to coral reefs and coral reef
13 ecosystems; and

14 “(5) an assessment of the condition of United
15 States coral reefs, accomplishments under this Act,
16 and the effectiveness of management actions to ad-
17 dress threats to coral reefs, including actions taken
18 to address large-scale threats to coral reef eco-
19 systems related to warming sea temperatures, coral
20 bleaching, coral diseases, and ocean acidification.”.

21 **SEC. 104. RENAMING OF FUND.**

22 Section 205 (16 U.S.C. 6404) is amended—

23 (1) in the section heading, by striking “**REEF**
24 **CONSERVATION**” and inserting “**REEF CON-**
25 **SERVATION AND RESTORATION**”; and

1 (2) in subsections (a) and (b), by striking
2 “Fund” and inserting “Coral Reef Conservation and
3 Restoration Fund”.

4 **SEC. 105. VESSEL GROUNDING INVENTORY; AGREEMENTS;**
5 **REGULATIONS; APPLICATION IN ACCORD-**
6 **ANCE WITH INTERNATIONAL LAW.**

7 The Act is further amended by redesignating sections
8 209 and 210 (16 U.S.C. 6409 and 6410) as sections 213
9 and 214, respectively, and by inserting after section 208
10 the following:

11 **“SEC. 209. VESSEL GROUNDING INVENTORY.**

12 “The Administrator, in coordination with other Fed-
13 eral agencies, may maintain an inventory of all vessel
14 grounding incidents involving coral reefs, including a de-
15 scription of—

16 “(1) the impacts to such resources;

17 “(2) vessel and ownership information, if avail-
18 able;

19 “(3) the estimated cost of removal, mitigation,
20 or restoration;

21 “(4) the response action taken by the owner,
22 the Administrator, the Commandant of the Coast
23 Guard, or other Federal, State, or territorial agency
24 representatives;

1 “(5) the status of the response action, including
2 the dates of vessel removal and mitigation or res-
3 toration and any actions taken to prevent future
4 grounding incidents; and

5 “(6) recommendations for additional naviga-
6 tional aids or other mechanisms for preventing fu-
7 ture grounding incidents.

8 **“SEC. 210. AGREEMENTS.**

9 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator may execute
10 and perform such contracts, leases, grants, or cooperative
11 agreements as may be necessary to carry out the purposes
12 of this title.

13 “(b) FUNDING.—Under an agreement entered into
14 under subsection (a), the Secretary may fulfill the terms
15 of the agreement by reimbursing or providing appro-
16 priated funds to, and may receive funds or reimburse-
17 ments from, Federal agencies, instrumentalities and lab-
18 oratories; State, local, and territorial governments; Native
19 American tribes and organizations; international organiza-
20 tions; foreign governments; universities and research cen-
21 ters; educational institutions; nonprofit organizations;
22 commercial organizations; and other public and private
23 persons or entities, as necessary for purposes identified
24 in section 202 and actions taken under section 206.

25 “(c) COOPERATIVE INSTITUTE.—

1 “(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—In addition to the gen-
2 eral authority provided by subsection (a), the Sec-
3 retary shall establish a cooperative institute for the
4 purpose of advancing and sustaining essential capa-
5 bility in coral reef research, to be known as the Cen-
6 ter of Excellence in Coral Reef Ecosystem Science
7 Cooperative Institute. Such Institute shall include
8 university-based research centers that have estab-
9 lished management-driven national or regional coral
10 reef research institutes, and are located in States
11 and United States territories with coral reef eco-
12 systems.

13 “(2) FUNCTIONS.—The Cooperative Institute
14 shall—

15 “(A) conduct ecological research and moni-
16 toring explicitly aimed at building capacity for
17 more effective resource management and coral
18 reef restoration; and

19 “(B) through agreements with centers re-
20 ferred to in paragraph (1)—

21 “(i) collaborate directly with govern-
22 mental resource management agencies,
23 nonprofit organizations, academic research
24 institutions, and other research organiza-
25 tions;

1 “(ii) build capacity within resource
2 management agencies to establish research
3 priorities, plan interdisciplinary research
4 projects, and make effective use of re-
5 search results; and

6 “(iii) conduct public education and
7 awareness programs for policymakers, re-
8 source managers, and the general public on
9 coral reef ecosystems, best practices for
10 coral reef and ecosystem management, con-
11 servation, and restoration, their value, and
12 threats to their sustainability.

13 “(d) MULTIYEAR COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—The
14 Administrator may enter into multiyear cooperative agree-
15 ments with the heads of other Federal agencies, States,
16 United States territories, local governments, academic in-
17 stitutions, including marine laboratories and coral reef in-
18 stitutes, and nongovernmental organizations to carry out
19 the activities of the national coral reef action strategy de-
20 veloped under section 203.

21 “(e) USE OF OTHER AGENCIES’ RESOURCES.—For
22 purposes related to the conservation, preservation, protec-
23 tion, restoration, or replacement of coral reefs or coral reef
24 ecosystems and the enforcement of this title, the Adminis-
25 trator is authorized to use, with their consent and with

1 or without reimbursement, the land, services, equipment,
2 personnel, and facilities of any Department, agency, or in-
3 strumentality of the United States, or of any State, local,
4 or territorial government, or Indian tribal government, or
5 of any political subdivision thereof, or of any foreign gov-
6 ernment or intergovernmental organization.

7 **“SEC. 211. REGULATIONS; APPLICATION IN ACCORDANCE**
8 **WITH INTERNATIONAL LAW.**

9 “(a) REGULATIONS.—The Administrator may issue
10 such regulations as are necessary and appropriate to carry
11 out the purposes of section 206.

12 “(b) RELATIONSHIP TO INTERNATIONAL LAW.—This
13 title and any regulations promulgated under this title shall
14 be applied in accordance with international law. No re-
15 strictions shall apply to or be enforced against a person
16 who is not a citizen, national, or resident alien of the
17 United States (including foreign-flag vessels) unless in ac-
18 cordance with international law.”.

19 **SEC. 106. AMENDMENTS TO DEFINITIONS.**

20 Section 214, as redesignated by section 105 of this
21 Act (relating to definitions; 16 U.S.C. 6409), is further
22 amended—

23 (1) by amending paragraph (2) to read as fol-
24 lows:

1 “(2) CONSERVATION.—The term ‘conservation’
2 means the use of methods and procedures that are
3 necessary to preserve or sustain native corals and
4 associated species as diverse, viable, and self-perpet-
5 uating coral reef ecosystems with minimal impacts
6 from invasive species, including—

7 “(A) all activities associated with resource
8 management, such as assessment, conservation,
9 protection, restoration, sustainable use, and
10 management of habitat;

11 “(B) mapping;

12 “(C) habitat monitoring;

13 “(D) scientific expertise and technical as-
14 sistance in the development and implementation
15 of management strategies for marine protected
16 areas and marine resources consistent with the
17 National Marine Sanctuaries Act (16 U.S.C.
18 1431 et seq.) and the Magnuson-Stevens Fish-
19 ery Conservation and Management Act (16
20 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.), and with respect for the
21 unique scientific, technical, and management
22 expertise and fisheries management responsibil-
23 ities of, State, and territorial fish and wildlife
24 management agencies;

25 “(E) law enforcement;

1 “(F) conflict resolution initiatives;

2 “(G) community outreach and education;

3 and

4 “(H) activities that promote safe and eco-
5 logically sound navigation and anchoring.”;

6 (2) by amending paragraph (3) to read as fol-
7 lows:

8 “(3) CORAL.—The term ‘coral’ means species
9 of the phylum Cnidaria, including—

10 “(A) all species of the orders Antipatharia
11 (black corals), Scleractinia (stony corals),
12 Gorgonacea (horny corals), Stolonifera
13 (organpipe corals and others), Alcyonacea (soft
14 corals), and Helioporacea (blue coral) of the
15 class Anthozoa; and

16 “(B) all species of the families Milleporidae
17 (fire corals) and Stylasteridae (stylasterid
18 hydrocorals) of the class Hydrozoa.”;

19 (3) by amending paragraph (4) to read as fol-
20 lows:

21 “(4) CORAL REEF.—The term ‘coral reef’
22 means a limestone relief feature, in the form of a
23 reef or shoal, comprised in whole or in part by living
24 coral, skeletal remains of coral, and other associated
25 sessile marine plants and animals.”;

1 (4) by amending paragraph (5) to read as fol-
2 lows:

3 “(5) CORAL REEF ECOSYSTEM.—The term
4 ‘coral reef ecosystem’ means—

5 “(A) corals and the associated community
6 of other species of reef organisms (including
7 reef plants and algae) associated with coral reef
8 habitat, and the biotic and abiotic factors and
9 processes that control coral growth and repro-
10 duction in such habitat.”; and

11 (5) by redesignating paragraphs (7) and (8) as
12 paragraphs (9) and (10), respectively, and by insert-
13 ing after paragraph (6) the following:

14 “(7) RESTORATION.—The term ‘restoration’
15 means the use of methods and procedures necessary
16 to enhance, rehabilitate, recreate, or create, a native,
17 functioning coral reef or coral reef ecosystem, in
18 part or in full, within suitable waters of the histor-
19 ical geographic range of such ecosystems.

20 “(8) RESILIENCE.—The term ‘resilience’ means
21 the capacity for corals, coral reefs, or coral reef eco-
22 systems to recover from natural and human disturb-
23 ance as determined by clearly identifiable, measur-
24 able, and science-based standards.”.

1 **SEC. 107. NATIONAL CORAL REEF ACTION STRATEGY.**

2 Section 203 (16 U.S.C. 6402) is amended to read as
3 follows:

4 **“SEC. 203. NATIONAL CORAL REEF ACTION STRATEGY.**

5 “(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after
6 the date of the enactment of the Conserving Our Reefs
7 and Livelihoods Act of 2016, the Administrator shall sub-
8 mit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Trans-
9 portation of the Senate and to the Committee on Natural
10 Resources of the House of Representatives and publish in
11 the Federal Register a national coral reef action strategy,
12 consistent with the purposes of this title. The Adminis-
13 trator and the Secretary of the Interior shall periodically
14 review and revise the strategy as necessary. In developing
15 the strategy, the Secretary and Secretary of the Interior
16 shall consult with the United States Coral Reef Task
17 Force established under title II of such Act.

18 “(b) GOALS AND OBJECTIVES.—The action strategy
19 shall include a statement of goals and objectives and an
20 implementation plan, including a description of the funds
21 obligated each fiscal year to advance coral reef conserva-
22 tion. The action strategy and implementation plan shall
23 include discussion of—

24 “(1) coastal uses and management;

25 “(2) water and air quality;

26 “(3) mapping and information management;

1 “(4) research, monitoring, and assessment, with
2 particular emphasis on the impacts of warming sea
3 temperatures, ocean acidification, coral bleaching,
4 coral diseases, and invasive species;

5 “(5) international and regional issues;

6 “(6) outreach and education;

7 “(7) local strategies developed by the States,
8 United States territories, or Federal agencies, in-
9 cluding regional fishery management councils;

10 “(8) conservation, including how the use of ma-
11 rine protected areas to serve as replenishment zones
12 will be developed using adaptive management ap-
13 proaches with clearly identifiable, measurable, and
14 science-based goals, in cooperation with, and with re-
15 spect for, the unique scientific, technical, and man-
16 agement expertise and fisheries management respon-
17 sibilities of, State and territorial fish and wildlife
18 management agencies, and consistent with local
19 practices and traditions; and

20 “(9) restoration efforts, including improving
21 coral reef resilience, especially to warming sea tem-
22 peratures, ocean acidification, coral bleaching, coral
23 diseases, and invasive species.”.

1 **SEC. 108. EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE.**

2 Section 206 (16 U.S.C. 6405) is amended to read as
3 follows:

4 **“SEC. 206. EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE.**

5 “The Secretary, in cooperation with the Federal
6 Emergency Management Agency, as appropriate, may pro-
7 vide assistance to any State, local, or territorial govern-
8 ment agency with jurisdiction over coral reef ecosystems
9 to address any unforeseen or disaster-related circumstance
10 pertaining to coral reef ecosystems through an Emergency
11 Response, Stabilization, and Restoration Account.”.

12 **SEC. 109. PRIZE COMPETITIONS TO PROMOTE INNOVATION**
13 **IN CORAL REEF RESEARCH AND CONSERVA-**
14 **TION.**

15 The Act is further amended by inserting after section
16 211, as added by section 105 of this Act, the following:

17 **“SEC. 212. CORAL REEF PRIZE COMPETITIONS.**

18 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The head of any Federal agency
19 with a representative serving on the United States Coral
20 Reef Task Force established under Executive Order 13089
21 issued on June 11, 1998 (16 U.S.C. 6401 note), may, ei-
22 ther individually or in cooperation with one or more agen-
23 cies, carry out a program to award prizes competitively
24 under section 24 of the Stevenson-Wydler Technology In-
25 novation Act of 1980 (15 U.S.C. 3719).

1 “(b) PURPOSES.—Any program carried out under
2 this section shall be for the purpose of stimulating innova-
3 tion to advance the ability of the United States to under-
4 stand, research, or monitor coral reef ecosystems, or to
5 develop management or adaptation options to preserve,
6 sustain, and restore coral reef ecosystems.

7 “(c) PRIORITY PROGRAMS.—Priority shall be given to
8 establish programs under this section that address im-
9 pacts to coral reef ecosystems, and communities or indus-
10 tries that are in distress due to the decline or degradation
11 of coral reef ecosystems, including innovative programs
12 that satisfy the approval criteria listed in paragraphs (1)
13 through (18) of section 204(g) of this Act, or support—

14 “(1) scientific research and monitoring that
15 furthers the understanding of—

16 “(A) causes behind coral reef decline and
17 degradation and the generally slow recovery fol-
18 lowing disturbances, including ocean acidifica-
19 tion and its impacts on coral reproduction; and

20 “(B) genetic and environmental factors
21 that promote resilience to warming sea tem-
22 peratures, ocean acidification, coral bleaching,
23 coral diseases, and invasive species;

24 “(2) the development of monitoring or manage-
25 ment options for communities or industries that are

1 experiencing significant financial hardship as a re-
2 sult of coral reef ecosystem degradation;

3 “(3) the development of adaptation options to
4 alleviate economic harm and job loss caused by dam-
5 age to coral reef ecosystems;

6 “(4) the development of measures to help vul-
7 nerable communities or industries, with an emphasis
8 on rural communities and businesses; and

9 “(5) the development of adaptation and man-
10 agement options for impacted tourism and fisheries
11 industries.”.

12 **TITLE II—UNITED STATES** 13 **CORAL REEF TASK FORCE**

14 **SEC. 201. UNITED STATES CORAL REEF TASK FORCE.**

15 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is hereby established
16 the United States Coral Reef Task Force.

17 (b) GOAL.—The goal of the Task Force shall be to
18 lead, coordinate, and strengthen Federal Government ac-
19 tions to better preserve and protect coral reef ecosystems.

20 (c) DUTIES.—The duties of the Task Force shall
21 be—

22 (1) to coordinate, in cooperation with State,
23 local, and territorial government partners, academic
24 partners, and nongovernmental partners if appro-
25 priate, activities regarding the mapping, monitoring,

1 research, conservation, mitigation, restoration of
2 coral reefs and coral reef ecosystems;

3 (2) to monitor and advise regarding implemen-
4 tation of the policy and Federal agency responsibil-
5 ities set forth in Executive Order 13089 and the na-
6 tional coral reef action strategy developed under sec-
7 tion 203 of the Coral Reef Conservation Act of
8 2000, as amended by this Act; and

9 (3) to work with the Secretary of State and the
10 Administrator of the Agency for International Devel-
11 opment, and in coordination with the other members
12 of the Task Force, to—

13 (A) assess the United States role in inter-
14 national trade and protection of coral species;
15 and

16 (B) encourage implementation of appro-
17 priate strategies and actions to promote con-
18 servation and sustainable use of coral reef re-
19 sources worldwide.

20 (d) VOTING MEMBERSHIP, GENERALLY.—The voting
21 members of the Task Force shall be comprised of—

22 (1) the Secretary of Commerce, acting through
23 the Administrator of the National Oceanic and At-
24 mospheric Administration, and the Secretary of the
25 Interior, who shall be co-chairs of the Task Force;

- 1 (2) the Administrator of the Agency of Inter-
2 national Development;
- 3 (3) the Secretary of Agriculture;
- 4 (4) the Secretary of Defense;
- 5 (5) the Secretary of the Army, acting through
6 the Corps of Engineers;
- 7 (6) the Secretary of Homeland Security;
- 8 (7) the Attorney General;
- 9 (8) the Secretary of State;
- 10 (9) the Secretary of Transportation;
- 11 (10) the Administrator of the Environmental
12 Protection Agency;
- 13 (11) the Administrator of the National Aero-
14 nautics and Space Administration;
- 15 (12) the Director of the National Science Foun-
16 dation; and
- 17 (13) the Governor, or a representative of the
18 Governor, of each of the State of Florida, the State
19 of Hawaii, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the
20 United States Virgin Islands, the territory of Amer-
21 ican Samoa, the territory of Guam, and the Com-
22 monwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.
- 23 (e) NONVOTING MEMBERS.—The Task Force shall
24 include the following nonvoting members:

1 (1) The member of the South Atlantic Fishery
2 Management Council who is designated by the Gov-
3 ernor of the State of Florida under section
4 302(b)(1) of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Con-
5 servation and Management Act (16 U.S.C.
6 1852(b)(1)).

7 (2) The member of the Gulf of Mexico Fishery
8 Management Council who is designated by the Gov-
9 ernor of the State of Florida under such section.

10 (3) The respective members of the Western Pa-
11 cific Fishery Management Council who are des-
12 ignated by the Governors of the State of Hawaii, the
13 territory of American Samoa, the territory of Guam,
14 and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Is-
15 lands under such section.

16 (4) The respective members of the Caribbean
17 Fishery Management Council who are designated by
18 the Governors of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico
19 and the United States Virgin Islands under such
20 section.

21 (5) In addition to the members appointed under
22 paragraphs (1) and (2), two current members of
23 each of the South Atlantic Fishery Management
24 Council and the Gulf of Mexico Fishery Management

1 Council, appointed under this paragraph by the Gov-
2 ernor of the State of Florida.

3 (6) In addition to the members appointed under
4 paragraph (3), two current members of the Western
5 Pacific Fishery Management Council, appointed
6 under this paragraph by the Governor of the State
7 of Hawaii.

8 (7) A member appointed by the President, or a
9 representative of the President, of each of the Freely
10 Associated States of the Federated States of Micro-
11 nesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the
12 Republic of Palau.

13 (f) RESPONSIBILITIES OF FEDERAL AGENCY MEM-
14 BERS.—

15 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Federal agency mem-
16 bers of the Task Force under paragraphs (1)
17 through (12) of subsection (d) shall—

18 (A) identify the actions of their agencies
19 that may affect coral reef ecosystems;

20 (B) utilize the programs and authorities of
21 their agencies to protect and enhance the condi-
22 tions of such ecosystems; and

23 (C) assist in the implementation of the Na-
24 tional Action Plan to Conserve Coral Reefs, the
25 national coral reef action strategy developed

1 under section 203 of the Coral Reef Conserva-
2 tion Act of 2000, as amended by this Act, the
3 local action strategies, and any other coordi-
4 nated efforts approved by the Task Force.

5 (2) CO-CHAIRS.—In addition to their respon-
6 sibilities under paragraph (1), the co-chairs of the
7 Task Force shall administer performance of the
8 functions of the Task Force and facilitate the co-
9 ordination of the Federal agency members of the
10 Task Force.

11 (g) WORKING GROUPS.—

12 (1) IN GENERAL.—The co-chairs of the Task
13 Force may establish working groups as necessary to
14 meet the goals and duties of this title. The Task
15 Force may request the co-chairs to establish such a
16 working group.

17 (2) PARTICIPATION BY NONGOVERNMENTAL OR-
18 GANIZATIONS.—The co-chairs may allow nongovern-
19 mental organizations, including academic institu-
20 tions, conservation groups, and commercial and rec-
21 reational fishing associations, to participate in such
22 a working group.

1 **TITLE III—DEPARTMENT OF THE**
2 **INTERIOR CORAL REEF AU-**
3 **THORITIES**

4 **SEC. 301. CORAL REEF CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION**
5 **ASSISTANCE.**

6 The Secretary of the Interior may provide scientific
7 expertise and technical assistance and, subject to the
8 availability of appropriations, financial assistance for the
9 conservation and restoration of coral reefs.

10 **SEC. 302. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE FISHING ACCESS RE-**
11 **STRICTIONS IN STATE AND TERRITORIAL MA-**
12 **RINE WATERS.**

13 (a) IMPLEMENTATION AND ENFORCEMENT PROHIB-
14 ITED.—Except as provided in subsections (b) and (c), the
15 Secretary of the Interior may not implement or enforce
16 any recreational fishing, charter fishing, or commercial
17 fishing access restrictions in any State or territorial ma-
18 rine waters within the jurisdiction of the National Park
19 Service developed as part of any general management plan
20 adopted after December 31, 2014.

21 (b) RESTRICTIONS UNDER FISHERY MANAGEMENT
22 PLANS.—Nothing in this section shall be construed as af-
23 fecting or intended to affect, or to in any way interfere
24 with, the implementation or enforcement of any rec-
25 reational or commercial fishing restrictions in any State

1 or territorial marine waters within the jurisdiction of the
2 National Park Service that—

3 (1) are developed as part of any fishery man-
4 agement plan;

5 (2) are developed in coordination and consulta-
6 tion with the fish and wildlife management agency
7 of the State or territory that has fisheries manage-
8 ment authority over those waters;

9 (3) are based on the best and most recent sci-
10 entific information available regarding the fishery re-
11 source, with priority given to scientific information
12 relied upon by affected States and United States ter-
13 ritories for fish conservation and management in
14 State and territorial waters; and

15 (4) represent the least restrictive measures nec-
16 essary for effective fish conservation and manage-
17 ment that will provide the best fishing opportunities
18 on a continuing basis in the affected areas of such
19 area under the jurisdiction of the National Park
20 Service, such as—

21 (A) size limits;

22 (B) possession limits;

23 (C) gear restrictions or requirements;

24 (D) seasonal closures; and

25 (E) access permits.

1 (c) FEDERAL MARINE WATERS WITHIN THE JURIS-
 2 DICTION OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE.—Nothing in
 3 this section shall be construed as affecting or intended to
 4 affect, or to in any way interfere with, the implementation
 5 or enforcement of any recreational or commercial fishing
 6 restrictions in any Federal marine waters within the juris-
 7 diction of the National Park Service.

8 (d) MARINE WATERS DEFINED.—In this section the
 9 term “marine waters” includes coastal waters and estu-
 10 aries.

11 **TITLE IV—MISCELLANEOUS** 12 **PROVISIONS**

13 **SEC. 401. STOCK ASSESSMENTS UNDER MAGNUSON-STE-** 14 **VENS FISHERY CONSERVATION AND MAN-** 15 **AGEMENT ACT.**

16 (a) IN GENERAL.—Title IV of the Magnuson-Stevens
 17 Fishery Conservation and Management Act (16 U.S.C.
 18 1881 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the fol-
 19 lowing:

20 **“SEC. 409. STOCK ASSESSMENTS FOR FISHERIES ASSOCI-** 21 **ATED WITH CORAL REEFS.**

22 “(a) EMPHASIS.—In preparing stock assessments
 23 under this Act, the Secretary shall place emphasis on such
 24 assessments for economically important fisheries associ-
 25 ated with coral reefs.

1 “(b) FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.—For stock assess-
 2 ments under this section there are appropriated such sums
 3 as are necessary.”.

4 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents
 5 in the first section of such Act is amended by adding at
 6 the end of the items relating to title IV the following:

“Sec. 409. Stock assessments for fisheries associated with coral reefs.”.

7 **SEC. 402. LIONFISH.**

8 (a) ADDITION OF SPECIES OF LIONFISH TO THE
 9 LIST OF INJURIOUS SPECIES THAT ARE PROHIBITED
 10 FROM BEING IMPORTED OR SHIPPED.—Section 42(a)(1)
 11 of title 18, United States Code, is amended by inserting
 12 after “*Dreissena polymorpha*,” the following: “of the red
 13 lionfish of the species *Pterois volitans*; of the devil lionfish
 14 of the species *Pterois miles*; of the Hawaiian turkeyfish
 15 of the species *Pterois sphex*; of the soldier lionfish of the
 16 species *Pterois russelii*; of the clearfin lionfish of the spe-
 17 cies *Pterois radiata*; of the species *Pterois paucispinula*;
 18 of the frillfin turkeyfish of the species *Pterois mombasae*;
 19 of the luna lionfish of the species *Pterois lunarata*; of the
 20 mandritsa of the species *Pterois brevipectoralis*; of the
 21 spotfin lionfish of the species *Pterois antennata*; of the
 22 scorpionfish of the species *Pterois andover*.”.

23 (b) EXEMPTION FROM PERMITTING FOR MOVE-
 24 MENT IN COMMERCE.—For purposes of section 14.21 of
 25 title 50, Code of Federal Regulations, deceased lionfish

1 and lionfish products shall not be treated as wildlife re-
2 quiring a permit pursuant to part 17 or 23 of such title.

3 (c) COMPETITIVE GRANTS TO INSTITUTIONS OF
4 HIGHER EDUCATION AND NONPROFIT RESEARCH ORGA-
5 NIZATIONS.—Public Law 86–686 (74 Stat. 733) is
6 amended—

7 (1) by redesignating section 2 as section 3; and

8 (2) by inserting after the first section (16
9 U.S.C. 753a) the following:

10 **“SEC. 2. COMPETITIVE GRANTS TO INSTITUTIONS OF HIGH-**
11 **ER EDUCATION AND NONPROFIT RESEARCH**
12 **ORGANIZATIONS TO COMBAT LIONFISH IN**
13 **THE ATLANTIC OCEAN AND THE GULF OF**
14 **MEXICO.**

15 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Commerce,
16 through the Cooperative Science and Education Program
17 of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
18 conducted under this Act, the Fish and Wildlife Coordina-
19 tion Act (16 U.S.C. 661 et seq.), and the Departments
20 of Commerce, Justice, and State, the Judiciary, and Re-
21 lated Agencies Appropriations Act, 1999 (section 101(b)
22 of division A of Public Law 105–277; 112 Stat. 2681–
23 50), shall award competitive grants to institutions of high-
24 er education and nonprofit research organizations to com-

1 bat the species of lionfish *Pterois miles* and *Pterois*
2 *volitans*, in the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico.

3 “(b) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible for a grant under
4 this section, an institution of higher education or nonprofit
5 research organization must—

6 “(1) have established research infrastructure
7 and proven capabilities of understanding the behav-
8 ior of such species and the ecosystems of the Atlan-
9 tic Ocean or the Gulf of Mexico; and

10 “(2) demonstrate a clear appreciation and un-
11 derstanding of the biological, chemical, and physical
12 aspects of such ecosystem.

13 “(c) ENCOURAGEMENT OF COLLABORATION.—In se-
14 lecting projects for grants under this section, the Sec-
15 retary of Commerce may encourage collaborative work
16 with stakeholder groups having practical experience with
17 gear, harvest techniques, and knowledge of local eco-
18 systems.

19 “(d) USE.—Amounts awarded as grants under this
20 section shall be used—

21 “(1) for lionfish research and the impact of
22 such species on the ecosystems of the of the Atlantic
23 Ocean or the Gulf of Mexico;

24 “(2) to develop innovative technologies, includ-
25 ing autonomous cameras and active acoustic systems

1 appropriate for coastal environments, for detection
2 of lionfish and determination of priority areas for re-
3 moval of invasive species; and

4 “(3) to develop lionfish mitigation technologies,
5 including traps and countermeasures.”.

6 **SEC. 403. BILLFISH CONSERVATION.**

7 (a) RETENTION REQUIRED FOR EXEMPTION FOR
8 TRADITIONAL FISHERIES AND MARKETS.—Section
9 4(c)(1) of the Billfish Conservation Act of 2012 (16
10 U.S.C. 1827a(c)(1)) is amended by inserting “and re-
11 tained” after “landed”.

12 (b) DEADLINE FOR REGULATIONS.—The Secretary
13 of Commerce shall issue a final rule implementing the
14 amendment made by subsection (a), not later than 45 days
15 after the date of the enactment of this Act.

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