

115TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 7138

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish an inter-agency task force on the use of Federal lands for medical treatment and therapy through outdoor recreation for veterans.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NOVEMBER 15, 2018

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey (for himself and Mr. SMITH of Washington) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to establish an inter-agency task force on the use of Federal lands for medical treatment and therapy through outdoor recreation for veterans.

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 “Accelerating Veterans
5 Recovery Outdoors Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. INTER-AGENCY TASK FORCE ON OUTDOOR RECRE-**
2 **ATION FOR VETERANS.**

3 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 180 days after
4 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of
5 Veterans Affairs shall establish a task force to be known
6 as the “Task Force on Outdoor Recreation for Veterans”
7 (in this Act referred to as the “Task Force”).

8 (b) COMPOSITION.—The Task Force shall be com-
9 posed of the following members or their designees:

10 (1) The Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

11 (2) The Secretary of the Interior.

12 (3) The Secretary of Health and Human Serv-
13 ices.

14 (4) The Secretary of Agriculture.

15 (5) The Secretary of Defense.

16 (6) The Chief of the Army Corps of Engineers.

17 (7) Any other members that the Secretary of
18 Veterans Affairs determines to be appropriate.

19 (c) CHAIRPERSONS.—The Secretary of Veterans Af-
20 fairs and the Secretary of the Interior shall serve as co-
21 chairpersons of the Task Force.

22 (d) DUTIES.—

23 (1) TASK FORCE.—The duties of the Task
24 Force shall be—

25 (A) to identify opportunities to formalize
26 coordination between the Department of Vet-

1 erans Affairs, public land agencies, and partner
2 organizations regarding the use of Federal
3 lands for medical treatment and therapy for
4 veterans;

5 (B) to identify barriers that exist to pro-
6 viding veterans with opportunities for medical
7 treatment and therapy through the use of out-
8 door recreation on Federal lands; and

9 (C) to develop recommendations to better
10 facilitate the use of Federal lands for preventa-
11 tive care, medical treatment, and therapy for
12 veterans.

13 (2) CONSULTATION.—The Task Force shall
14 carry out such responsibilities in consultation with
15 appropriate veterans outdoor recreation groups.

16 (e) REPORTS.—

17 (1) PRELIMINARY REPORT.—Not later than
18 180 days after the date on which the Task Force is
19 established, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall
20 submit to Congress a report on the preliminary find-
21 ings of the Task Force.

22 (2) FINAL REPORT.—Not later than one year
23 after the submission of the preliminary report under
24 paragraph (1), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs
25 shall submit to Congress a report on the findings of

1 the Task Force, which shall include the rec-
2 ommendations developed under subsection (d)(1)(C).

3 (f) DURATION.—The Task Force shall terminate on
4 the date that is one year after the date of the submission
5 of the final report under in subsection (e)(2).

6 (g) DEFINITIONS.—In this Act:

7 (1) The term “Federal lands” means—

8 (A) lands that are under the administra-
9 tion of the Secretary of Agriculture; or

10 (B) lands that are under the administra-
11 tion of the Secretary of Interior.

12 (2) The term “veteran” has the meaning given
13 such term in section 101(2) of title 38, United
14 States Code.

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