

Union Calendar No. 376

119TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. R. 2860

[Report No. 119–437]

To reauthorize the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative Act to promote the protection of the resources of the Northwest Straits, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 10, 2025

Mr. LARSEN of Washington (for himself and Ms. RANDALL) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

JANUARY 12, 2026

Additional sponsors: Ms. STRICKLAND, Ms. DELBENE, Mr. SMITH of Washington, Ms. JAYAPAL, and Ms. SCHRIER

JANUARY 12, 2026

Reported with an amendment, committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, and ordered to be printed

[Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in italic]

[For text of introduced bill, see copy of bill as introduced on April 10, 2025]

A BILL

To reauthorize the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative Act to promote the protection of the resources of the Northwest Straits, 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 “Northwest Straits Ma-*
 5 *rine Conservation Initiative Reauthorization Act of 2025”.*

6 **SEC. 2. REAUTHORIZATION OF NORTHWEST STRAITS MA-**
 7 **RINE CONSERVATION INITIATIVE ACT.**

8 *The Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative*
 9 *Act (title IV of Public Law 105–384; 112 Stat. 3458) is*
 10 *amended—*

11 *(1) in section 402, by striking “Commission (in*
 12 *this title referred to as the ‘Commission’).” and in-*
 13 *serting “Commission.”; and*

14 *(2) by striking sections 403, 404, and 405 and*
 15 *inserting the following:*

16 **“SEC. 403. DEFINITIONS.**

17 *“In this title:*

18 *“(1) COMMISSION.—The term ‘Commission’*
 19 *means the Northwest Straits Advisory Commission es-*
 20 *tablished by section 402.*

21 *“(2) MARINE RESOURCES COMMITTEE.—The*
 22 *term ‘marine resources committee’ means a county*
 23 *government committee that assists in assessing ma-*
 24 *rine resource and conservation needs.*

1 “(3) *NORTHWEST STRAITS REGION.*—*The term*
 2 *‘Northwest Straits region’ means the marine waters of*
 3 *the Strait of Juan de Fuca and of Puget Sound from*
 4 *the Canadian border to the south end of Snohomish*
 5 *County.*

6 “(4) *TRIBAL GOVERNMENT.*—*The term ‘Tribal*
 7 *government’ means the recognized governing body of*
 8 *any Indian or Alaska Native tribe, band, nation,*
 9 *pueblo, village, community, component band, or com-*
 10 *ponent reservation individually identified (including*
 11 *parenthetically) in the list published most recently as*
 12 *of the date of enactment of the Northwest Straits Ma-*
 13 *rine Conservation Initiative Reauthorization Act of*
 14 *2025 pursuant to section 104 of the Federally Recog-*
 15 *nized Indian Tribe List Act of 1994 (25 U.S.C.*
 16 *5131).*

17 “(5) *UNDER SECRETARY.*—*The term ‘Under Sec-*
 18 *retary’ means the Under Secretary of Commerce for*
 19 *Oceans and Atmosphere.*

20 **“SEC. 404. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMISSION.**

21 “(a) *COMPOSITION.*—

22 “(1) *IN GENERAL.*—*The Commission shall be*
 23 *composed of 14 members, except as provided in para-*
 24 *graph (2), who shall be appointed as follows:*

1 “(A) One member appointed by a consensus
2 of the members of a marine resources committee
3 for San Juan County, Washington.

4 “(B) One member appointed by a consensus
5 of the members of a marine resources committee
6 for Island County, Washington.

7 “(C) One member appointed by a consensus
8 of the members of a marine resources committee
9 for Skagit County, Washington.

10 “(D) One member appointed by a consensus
11 of the members of a marine resources committee
12 for Whatcom County, Washington.

13 “(E) One member appointed by a consensus
14 of the members of a marine resources committee
15 for Snohomish County, Washington.

16 “(F) One member appointed by a consensus
17 of the members of a marine resources committee
18 for Clallam County, Washington.

19 “(G) One member appointed by a consensus
20 of the members of a marine resources committee
21 for Jefferson County, Washington.

22 “(H) Two members appointed by the Sec-
23 retary of the Interior, in coordination with the
24 Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission and in
25 consultation with the Tribal governments affected

1 *by this title, to represent the interests of such*
 2 *Tribal governments.*

3 “(I) *One member appointed by the Gov-*
 4 *ernor of the State of Washington to represent the*
 5 *interests of the Puget Sound Partnership.*

6 “(J) *Four members appointed by the Gov-*
 7 *ernor of the State of Washington who—*

8 “(i) *are residents of the State of Wash-*
 9 *ington; and*

10 “(ii) *are not employed by a Federal,*
 11 *State, or local government, excluding an in-*
 12 *stitution of higher education.*

13 “(2) *ADDITIONAL MEMBERS.—The Commission*
 14 *may, as determined necessary to improve the ability*
 15 *of the Commission to perform the duties of the Com-*
 16 *mission under section 405(b), appoint members in ad-*
 17 *dition to those appointed under paragraph (1). Any*
 18 *such additional member shall be appointed by a con-*
 19 *sensus of the members of a marine resources com-*
 20 *mittee that is not described in such paragraph.*

21 “(b) *VACANCIES.—A vacancy in the Commission shall*
 22 *be filled in the manner in which the original appointment*
 23 *was made.*

24 “(c) *CHAIRPERSON.—The Commission shall select a*
 25 *Chairperson from among its members.*

1 “(d) *MEETING.*—*The Commission shall meet at the*
2 *call of the Chairperson, but not less frequently than quar-*
3 *terly.*

4 “(e) *LIAISON.*—

5 “(1) *IN GENERAL.*—*The Under Secretary, in*
6 *consultation with the Commission, shall appoint an*
7 *employee of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric*
8 *Administration—*

9 “(A) *to serve as a liaison between the Com-*
10 *mission and the Department of Commerce;*

11 “(B) *to coordinate programs of the National*
12 *Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration with*
13 *activities related to the goal of the Commission*
14 *described in section 405(a); and*

15 “(C) *to perform additional liaison functions*
16 *benefitting the Commission and the National*
17 *Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which*
18 *may include, as agreed to by the Commission*
19 *and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Ad-*
20 *ministration, attending meetings and other*
21 *events of the Commission as a nonvoting partici-*
22 *pant.*

23 “(2) *LIMITATION.*—*Service as a member of the*
24 *Commission by the employee appointed under para-*
25 *graph (1)—*

1 “(A) is limited to the employee’s service as
2 a liaison; and

3 “(B) does not obligate the employee to per-
4 form any duty of the Commission under section
5 405(b).

6 “(f) ADMINISTRATION.—The Commission may enter
7 into cooperative agreements with the State of Washington
8 for staffing and administrative services for the purposes of
9 supporting the duties of the Commission under section
10 405(b).

11 **“SEC. 405. GOAL AND DUTIES OF THE COMMISSION.**

12 “(a) GOAL.—The goal of the Commission is to protect
13 and restore the marine waters, habitats, and species of the
14 Northwest Straits region to achieve ecosystem health and
15 sustainable resource use by—

16 “(1) designing and recommending projects that
17 are driven by the best available science, local prior-
18 ities, community-based decisions, and the ability to
19 measure results;

20 “(2) building awareness and stewardship and
21 making recommendations to improve the health of the
22 marine resources of the Northwest Straits region;

23 “(3) maintaining and expanding diverse mem-
24 bership and collaboration with partner organizations,
25 such as the Puget Sound Partnership;

1 “(4) *expanding partnerships with Tribal govern-*
2 *ments and continuing to support Tribal treaties, cul-*
3 *tures, and subsistence and Tribal treaty rights; and*

4 “(5) *recognizing the importance of economic and*
5 *social benefits that are dependent on marine environ-*
6 *ments and sustainable marine resources.*

7 “(b) *DUTIES.—The duties of the Commission are the*
8 *following:*

9 “(1) *To provide resources and technical support*
10 *for marine resources committees.*

11 “(2) *To work with such marine resources com-*
12 *mittees and appropriate entities of Federal, State,*
13 *and local governments and Tribal governments to*
14 *provide advice in developing regional programs to*
15 *monitor the overall health of the marine ecosystem of*
16 *the Northwest Straits region.*

17 “(3) *To collect marine resources data and iden-*
18 *tify factors adversely affecting or preventing the res-*
19 *toration of the health of the marine ecosystem and*
20 *coastal economies of the Northwest Straits region to*
21 *inform decisionmakers.*

22 “(4) *To develop scientifically sound restoration*
23 *and protection recommendations, informed by local*
24 *priorities, that address such factors.*

1 “(5) *To serve as a public forum for the informal*
2 *discussion of policies and actions, with respect to the*
3 *marine ecosystem of the Northwest Straits region, of*
4 *Federal, State, or local governments, Tribal govern-*
5 *ments, or the Government of Canada.*

6 “(6) *To inform appropriate authorities and local*
7 *communities about the marine ecosystem of the North-*
8 *west Straits region and about issues relating to the*
9 *marine ecosystem of the Northwest Straits region.*

10 “(7) *To consult with all affected Tribal govern-*
11 *ments in the Northwest Straits region to ensure that*
12 *the work of the Commission does not violate Tribal*
13 *treaty rights.*

14 “(c) *COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION.—The Com-*
15 *mission—*

16 “(1) *shall carry out the duties described in sub-*
17 *section (b) in coordination and collaboration, as ap-*
18 *propriate, with Federal, State, and local governments*
19 *and Tribal governments, including by—*

20 “(A) *providing technical support and as-*
21 *sistance to any Tribal government seeking rep-*
22 *resentation and participation on the Commis-*
23 *sion; and*

1 “(B) supporting the work and duties of the
2 liaison to the Commission under section 404(e);
3 and

4 “(2) may enter into cooperative agreements with
5 nonprofit entities, such as the Northwest Straits
6 Foundation, to provide assistance, including financial
7 assistance, in carrying out the duties described in
8 subsection (b).

9 “(d) LIMITATIONS.—Nothing in this title provides the
10 Commission with authority to issue regulations or imple-
11 ment any Federal law or regulation.

12 “(e) ACCEPTANCE OF DONATIONS.—For purposes of
13 carrying out this section, the Commission may solicit, ac-
14 cept, receive, hold, administer, and use gifts, devises, and
15 bequests without any further approval or administrative ac-
16 tion.

17 “(f) ANNUAL REPORT.—

18 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Each year, the Commission
19 shall prepare, submit to the Committee on Commerce,
20 Science, and Transportation and the Committee on
21 Appropriations of the Senate, the Committee on Nat-
22 ural Resources and the Committee on Appropriations
23 of the House of Representatives, and the Under Sec-
24 retary, and make available to the public a report de-
25 scribing—

1 “(A) the activities carried out by the Com-
2 mission during the preceding year; and

3 “(B) the progress in achieving the bench-
4 marks described in paragraph (2).

5 “(2) *BENCHMARKS.*—The benchmarks described
6 in this paragraph are the following:

7 “(A) Protection and restoration of marine,
8 coastal, and nearshore habitats within the North-
9 west Straits region.

10 “(B) Protection and restoration of marine
11 resources populations to healthy, sustainable lev-
12 els.

13 “(C) Improvement of the water quality of
14 the Northwest Straits region.

15 “(D) Collection of high-quality data and
16 promotion of the use and dissemination of such
17 data for the purposes of ecosystem monitoring.

18 “(E) Promotion of stewardship and under-
19 standing of marine resources of the Northwest
20 Straits region through education and outreach,
21 including by targeted outreach to underresourced
22 communities.

23 **“SEC. 406. SUNSET.**

24 *“The authority to carry out this title shall terminate*
25 *on the date that is 7 years after the date of the enactment*

1 *of the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative Re-*
2 *authorization Act of 2025.”.*

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