

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 2709

AN ACT

To improve the health and resiliency of giant sequoias, 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,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

2 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the
3 “Save Our Sequoias Act”.

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

- Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
- Sec. 2. Definitions.
- Sec. 3. Shared stewardship agreement for giant sequoias.
- Sec. 4. Giant sequoia lands coalition.
- Sec. 5. Giant sequoia health and resiliency assessment.
- Sec. 6. Giant sequoia emergency response.
- Sec. 7. Giant sequoia reforestation and rehabilitation strategy.
- Sec. 8. Giant sequoia strike teams.
- Sec. 9. Giant sequoia collaborative restoration grants.
- Sec. 10. Giant sequoia insect monitoring and technology.
- Sec. 11. Stewardship contracting for giant sequoias.
- Sec. 12. Giant sequoia emergency protection program and fund.

6 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

7 In this Act:

8 (1) ASSESSMENT.—The term “Assessment”
9 means the Giant Sequoia Health and Resiliency As-
10 sessment required by section 5.

11 (2) COALITION.—The term “Coalition” means
12 the Giant Sequoia Lands Coalition codified under
13 section 4(a).

14 (3) COLLABORATIVE PROCESS.—The term “col-
15 laborative process” means a collaborative process as
16 described in section 4003(b)(2) of the Omnibus Pub-
17 lic Land Management Act of 2009 (16 U.S.C.
18 7303(b)(2)).

19 (4) COVERED NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM
20 LANDS.—The term “covered National Forest System

lands” means the proclaimed National Forest System lands reserved or withdrawn from the public domain of the United States covering the Sequoia National Forest and Giant Sequoia National Monument, Sierra National Forest, and Tahoe National Forest.

(5) COVERED PUBLIC LANDS.—The term “covered public lands” means—

(A) the Case Mountain Extensive Recreation Management Area in California managed by the Bureau of Land Management; and

(B) Kings Canyon National Park, Sequoia National Park, and Yosemite National Park in California managed by the National Park Service.

(6) GIANT SEQUOIA.—The term “giant sequoia” means a tree of the species *Sequoiadendron giganteum*.

(7) PROTECTION PROJECT.—The term “Protection Project” means a Giant Sequoia Protection Project carried out under section 6.

(8) REFORESTATION.—The term “reforestation” means the act of renewing tree cover, taking into consideration species composition and resilience, by establishing young trees through—

1 (A) natural regeneration;

2 (B) natural regeneration with site prepara-
3 tion and vegetation competition control; or

4 (C) planting or direct seeding.

5 (9) REHABILITATION.—The term “rehabilita-
6 tion” means any action taken during the 5-year pe-
7 riod beginning on the last day of a wildland fire to
8 repair or improve fire-impacted lands which are un-
9 likely to recover to management-approved conditions.

10 (10) RELEVANT CONGRESSIONAL COMMIT-
11 TEES.—The term “relevant Congressional Commit-
12 tees” means—

13 (A) the Committees on Natural Resources,
14 Agriculture, and Appropriations of the House of
15 Representatives; and

16 (B) the Committees on Energy and Nat-
17 ural Resources, Agriculture, Nutrition, and
18 Forestry, and Appropriations of the Senate.

19 (11) RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL.—The term “re-
20 sponsible official” means an employee of the Depart-
21 ment of the Interior or Forest Service who has the
22 authority to make and implement a decision on a
23 proposed action.

24 (12) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary”
25 means the Secretary of the Interior.

1 (13) SECRETARY CONCERNED.—The term
2 “Secretary concerned” means—

3 (A) the Secretary of Agriculture, with re-
4 spect to covered National Forest System lands,
5 or their designee; and

6 (B) the Secretary of the Interior, with re-
7 spect to covered public lands, or their designee.

8 (14) STRATEGY.—The term “Strategy” means
9 the Giant Sequoia Reforestation and Rehabilitation
10 Strategy established under section 7.

11 (15) STRIKE TEAM.—The term “Strike Team”
12 means a Giant Sequoia Strike Team established
13 under section 8.

14 (16) TRIBE.—The term “Tribe” means the
15 Tule River Indian Tribe of the Tule River Reserva-
16 tion, California.

17 **SEC. 3. SHARED STEWARDSHIP AGREEMENT FOR GIANT SE-**
18 **QUOIAS.**

19 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after re-
20 ceiving a request from the Governor of the State of Cali-
21 fornia or the Tribe, the Secretary shall enter into or ex-
22 pand an existing shared stewardship agreement or enter
23 into a similar agreement with the Secretary of Agriculture,
24 the Governor of the State of California, and the Tribe to

1 jointly carry out the short-term and long-term manage-
2 ment and conservation of giant sequoias.

3 (b) PARTICIPATION.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—If the Secretary has not re-
5 ceived a request from the Governor of the State of
6 California or the Tribe under subsection (a) before
7 the date that is 90 days after the date of enactment
8 of this Act, the Secretary shall enter into the agree-
9 ment under subsection (a) and jointly implement
10 such agreement with the Secretary of Agriculture.

11 (2) FUTURE PARTICIPATION.—If the Secretary
12 receives a request from the Governor of the State of
13 California or the Tribe any time after entering into
14 the agreement with the Secretary of Agriculture
15 under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall accept the
16 Governor of the State of California or the Tribe as
17 a party to such agreement.

18 **SEC. 4. GIANT SEQUOIA LANDS COALITION.**

19 (a) CODIFICATION.—The Coalition is the entity es-
20 tablished under the charter titled “Giant Sequoia Lands
21 Coalition Charter” (or successor charter) signed during
22 the period beginning June 2, 2022 and ending August 2,
23 2022 by each of the following:

24 (1) The National Park Service, representing Se-
25 quoia and Kings Canyon National Parks.

1 (2) The National Park Service, representing
2 Yosemite National Park.

3 (3) The Forest Service, representing Sequoia
4 National Forest and Giant Sequoia National Monu-
5 ment.

6 (4) The Forest Service, representing Sierra Na-
7 tional Forest.

8 (5) The Forest Service, representing Tahoe Na-
9 tional Forest.

10 (6) The Bureau of Land Management, rep-
11 resenting Case Mountain Extensive Recreation Man-
12 agement Area.

13 (7) The Tribe, representing the Tule River In-
14 dian Reservation.

15 (8) The State of California, representing
16 Calaveras Big Trees State Park.

17 (9) The State of California, representing Moun-
18 tain Home Demonstration State Forest.

19 (10) The University of California, Berkeley,
20 representing Whitaker's Research Forest.

21 (11) The County of Tulare, California, rep-
22 resenting Balch Park.

23 (b) DUTIES.—In addition to the duties specified in
24 the charter referenced in subsection (a), the Coalition
25 shall—

1 (1) produce the Assessment under section 5;

2 (2) observe implementation, and provide policy
3 recommendations to the Secretary concerned, with
4 respect to—

5 (A) Protection Projects carried out under
6 section 6; and

7 (B) the Strategy established under section
8 7;

9 (3) facilitate collaboration and coordination on
10 Protection Projects, particularly projects that cross
11 jurisdictional boundaries;

12 (4) facilitate information sharing, including best
13 available science as described in section 5(d) and
14 mapping resources; and

15 (5) support the development and dissemination
16 of educational materials and programs that inform
17 the public about the threats to the health and resil-
18 iency of giant sequoia groves and actions being
19 taken to reduce the risk to such groves from high-
20 severity wildfire, insects, and drought.

21 (c) ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT, TECHNICAL SERV-
22 ICES, AND STAFF SUPPORT.—The Secretary shall make
23 personnel of the Department of the Interior available to
24 the Coalition for administrative support, technical serv-
25 ices, development and dissemination of educational mate-

1 rials, and staff support that the Secretary determines nec-
2 essary to carry out this section.

3 (d) PUBLIC MEETING REQUIREMENT.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in para-
5 graph (2), the Coalition shall provide for public ob-
6 servation at no less than one meeting annually.

7 (2) CLOSED SESSIONS.—The Coalition may
8 close portions of a meeting as provided in paragraph
9 (1) to the public only when discussion will involve—

10 (A) sensitive law enforcement, security, or
11 emergency response matters, the public disclo-
12 sure of which would compromise public safety;
13 or

14 (B) confidential commercial information,
15 private property information, or landowner in-
16 formation.

17 **SEC. 5. GIANT SEQUOIA HEALTH AND RESILIENCY ASSESS-**
18 **MENT.**

19 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 6 months after the
20 date of the enactment of this Act, the Coalition shall sub-
21 mit to the relevant Congressional Committees a Giant Se-
22 quoa Health and Resiliency Assessment that, based on
23 the best available science—

24 (1) identifies—

1 (A) each giant sequoia grove that has ex-
2 periencea—

3 (i) stand-replacing disturbance; or

4 (ii) disturbance but continues to have
5 living giant sequoias within the grove, in-
6 cluding identifying the tree mortality and
7 regeneration of giant sequoias within such
8 grove;

9 (B) each giant sequoia grove that is at
10 high risk of experiencing a stand-replacing dis-
11 turbance;

12 (C) lands—

13 (i) contiguous or adjacent to giant se-
14 quoa groves that are at risk of experi-
15 encing high-severity wildfires that could
16 adversely impact such giant sequoia
17 groves; or

18 (ii) in which the placement of fuel
19 breaks could reduce the risk of high-sever-
20 ity wildfires that could adversely impact
21 giant sequoia groves; and

22 (D) each giant sequoia grove that has ex-
23 periencea disturbance and is unlikely to natu-
24 rally regenerate and is in need of reforestation;

1 (2) analyzes the resiliency of each giant sequoia
2 grove to threats, such as—

3 (A) high-severity wildfire;

4 (B) insects, including beetle kill; and

5 (C) drought;

6 (3) examines how historical, Tribal, or current
7 approaches to wildland fire suppression and forest
8 management activities across various jurisdictions
9 have impacted the health and resiliency of giant se-
10 quoa groves with respect to—

11 (A) high-severity wildfires;

12 (B) insects, including beetle kill; and

13 (C) drought; and

14 (4) includes program and policy recommenda-
15 tions that address—

16 (A) options to enhance communication, co-
17 ordination, and collaboration, particularly for
18 cross-boundary projects, to improve the health
19 and resiliency of giant sequoias; and

20 (B) research gaps that should be addressed
21 to improve the best available science on the
22 giant sequoias.

23 (b) ANNUAL UPDATES.—Not later than 1 year after
24 the submission of the Assessment under subsection (a),
25 and annually thereafter, the Coalition shall submit an up-

1 dated Assessment to the relevant Congressional Commit-
2 tees that—

3 (1) includes any new data, information, or best
4 available science that has changed or become avail-
5 able since the previous Assessment was submitted;

6 (2) with respect to Protection Projects—

7 (A) includes information on the number of
8 Protection Projects initiated the previous year
9 and the estimated timeline for completing those
10 projects;

11 (B) includes information on the number of
12 Protection Projects planned in the upcoming
13 year and the estimated timeline for completing
14 those projects;

15 (C) provides status updates and long-term
16 monitoring reports on giant sequoia groves
17 after the completion of Protection Projects; and

18 (D) if the Secretary concerned failed to re-
19 duce hazardous fuels in at least 3 giant sequoia
20 groves in the previous year, a written expla-
21 nation that includes—

22 (i) a detailed explanation of what im-
23 pediments resulted in failing to reduce haz-
24 ardous fuels in at least 3 giant sequoia
25 groves; and

1 (ii) a detailed explanation of what ac-
2 tions the Secretary concerned is taking to
3 ensure that hazardous fuels are reduced in
4 at least 3 giant sequoia groves the fol-
5 lowing year; and

6 (3) with respect to reforestation and rehabilita-
7 tion of giant sequoias—

8 (A) contains updates on the implementa-
9 tion of the Strategy under section 7, including
10 grove-level data on reforestation and rehabilita-
11 tion activities; and

12 (B) provides status updates and moni-
13 toring reports on giant sequoia groves that have
14 experienced reforestation or rehabilitation as
15 part of the Strategy under section 7.

16 (c) DASHBOARD.—

17 (1) REQUIREMENT TO MAINTAIN.—The Coali-
18 tion shall create and maintain a website that—

19 (A) publishes the Assessment, annual up-
20 dates to the Assessment, and other educational
21 materials developed by the Coalition;

22 (B) contains searchable information about
23 individual giant sequoia groves, including the—

1 (i) resiliency of such groves to threats
2 described in paragraphs (1) and (2) of
3 subsection (a);

4 (ii) Protection Projects that have been
5 proposed, initiated, or completed in such
6 groves; and

7 (iii) reforestation and rehabilitation
8 activities that have been proposed, initi-
9 ated, or completed in such groves; and

10 (C) maintains a searchable database to
11 track—

12 (i) the status of Federal environ-
13 mental reviews and authorizations for spe-
14 cific Protection Projects and reforestation
15 and rehabilitation activities; and

16 (ii) the projected cost of Protection
17 Projects and reforestation and rehabilita-
18 tion activities.

19 (2) SEARCHABLE DATABASE.—The Coalition
20 shall include information on the status of Protection
21 Projects in the searchable database created under
22 paragraph (1)(C), including—

23 (A) a comprehensive permitting timetable;

1 (B) the status of the compliance of each
2 lead agency, cooperating agency, and partici-
3 pating agency with the permitting timetable;

4 (C) any modifications of the permitting
5 timetable required under subparagraph (A), in-
6 cluding an explanation as to why the permitting
7 timetable was modified; and

8 (D) information about project-related pub-
9 lic meetings, public hearings, and public com-
10 ment periods, which shall be presented in
11 English and the predominant language of the
12 community or communities most affected by the
13 project, as that information becomes available.

14 (d) BEST AVAILABLE SCIENCE.—In utilizing the best
15 available science for the Assessment, the Coalition shall
16 include—

17 (1) data and peer-reviewed research from aca-
18 demic institutions with a demonstrated history of
19 studying giant sequoias and with experience ana-
20 lyzing distinct management strategies to improve
21 giant sequoia resiliency;

22 (2) traditional ecological knowledge from the
23 Tribe related to improving the health and resiliency
24 of giant sequoia groves; and

1 (3) data from Federal, State, Tribal, and local
2 governments or agencies, and other interested stake-
3 holders with a demonstrated history of studying
4 giant sequoias and with experience analyzing distinct
5 management strategies to improve giant sequoia re-
6 siliency.

7 (e) TECHNOLOGY IMPROVEMENTS.—In carrying out
8 this section, the Secretary may enter into memorandums
9 of understanding or agreements with other Federal agen-
10 cies or departments, State or local governments, Tribal
11 governments, private entities, or academic institutions to
12 improve, with respect to the Assessment, the use and inte-
13 gration of—

14 (1) advanced remote sensing and geospatial
15 technologies;

16 (2) statistical modeling and analysis; or

17 (3) any other technology the Secretary deter-
18 mines will benefit the quality of information used in
19 the Assessment.

20 (f) PLANNING.—The Coalition shall make informa-
21 tion from this Assessment available to the Secretary con-
22 cerned and State of California to integrate into the—

23 (1) State of California’s Wildfire and Forest
24 Resilience Action Plan;

1 (2) Forest Service’s 10-year Wildfire Crisis
2 Strategy (or successor plan); and

3 (3) Department of the Interior’s Wildfire Risk
4 Five-Year Monitoring, Maintenance, and Treatment
5 Plan (or successor plan).

6 (g) RELATION TO THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL
7 POLICY ACT OF 1969.—The development and submission
8 of the Assessment under subsection (a) shall not be sub-
9 ject to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42
10 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.).

11 **SEC. 6. GIANT SEQUOIA EMERGENCY RESPONSE.**

12 (a) EMERGENCY RESPONSE TO PROTECT GIANT SE-
13 QUOIAS.—

14 (1) IN GENERAL.—

15 (A) EMERGENCY DETERMINATION.—Con-
16 gress determines that—

17 (i) an emergency exists on covered
18 public lands and covered National Forest
19 System lands that makes it necessary to
20 carry out Protection Projects that take
21 needed actions to respond to the threat of
22 wildfires, insects, and drought to giant se-
23 quoias; and

24 (ii) Protection Projects are necessary
25 to control the immediate impacts of the

1 emergency described in clause (i) and are
2 needed to mitigate harm to life, property,
3 or important natural or cultural resources
4 on covered public lands and covered Na-
5 tional Forest System lands.

6 (B) APPLICATION.—The emergency deter-
7 mination established under subparagraph (A)
8 shall apply to all covered public lands and cov-
9 ered National Forest System lands.

10 (C) EXPIRATION.—The emergency deter-
11 mination established under subparagraph (A)
12 shall expire on the date that is 7 years after the
13 date of the enactment of this Act.

14 (2) IMPLEMENTATION.—While the emergency
15 determination established under paragraph (1) is in
16 effect, the following shall apply:

17 (A) The Secretary concerned, acting
18 through a responsible official, shall carry out
19 Protection Projects on covered public lands and
20 covered National Forest System lands in ac-
21 cordance with this section, all applicable land
22 management plans, and the laws (including reg-
23 ulations) applicable to the Secretary concerned.

1 (B) A responsible official shall carry out
2 Protection Projects in accordance with the fol-
3 lowing, as applicable:

4 (i) Section 220.4(b) of title 36, Code
5 of Federal Regulations (as in effect July
6 21, 2022), with respect to covered Na-
7 tional Forest System lands.

8 (ii) Section 46.150 of title 43, Code of
9 Federal Regulations (as in effect October
10 12, 2022), with respect to covered public
11 lands.

12 (iii) Section 402.05 of title 50, Code
13 of Federal Regulations (as in effect July
14 21, 2022), with respect to covered Na-
15 tional Forest System lands and covered
16 public lands.

17 (iv) Section 800.12 of title 36, Code
18 of Federal Regulations (as in effect July
19 21, 2022), with respect to covered Na-
20 tional Forest System lands and covered
21 public lands.

22 (C) The rules established under sub-
23 sections (d) and (e) of section 40807 of the In-
24 frastructure Investment and Jobs Act (16
25 U.S.C. 6592c(d), (e)) shall apply with respect

1 to Protection Projects by substituting “Protec-
2 tion Projects” for “authorized emergency action
3 under this section” each place it appears in
4 such subsections.

5 (D) Protection Projects shall be subject to
6 the requirements of section 106 of the Healthy
7 Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C.
8 6516).

9 (3) PROTECTION PROJECTS.—The responsible
10 official shall carry out the following forest manage-
11 ment activities as Protection Projects under the
12 emergency determination under this section:

13 (A) Conducting hazardous fuels manage-
14 ment, including mechanical thinning, mastica-
15 tion, and prescribed burning.

16 (B) Removing hazard trees, dead trees, or
17 dying trees, as determined by the responsible
18 official.

19 (C) Removing trees to address over-
20 stocking or crowding in a forest stand, con-
21 sistent with the appropriate basal area of the
22 forest stand and the best available science, as
23 determined by the responsible official.

1 (D) Activities to address insects, disease,
2 invasive species, and vegetative encroachment of
3 a giant sequoia grove.

4 (E) Any combination of activities described
5 in this paragraph.

6 (4) REQUIREMENTS.—

7 (A) IN GENERAL.—Protection Projects
8 carried out under paragraph (3) and reforest-
9 ation and rehabilitation activities carried out
10 under this Act that are described by subpara-
11 graph (C) are categorically excluded from the
12 preparation of an environmental assessment or
13 an environmental impact statement under sec-
14 tion 102 of the National Environmental Policy
15 Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332).

16 (B) AVAILABILITY.—The Secretary con-
17 cerned shall use the categorical exclusion estab-
18 lished under subparagraph (A) in accordance
19 with this section.

20 (C) REQUIREMENTS.—A Protection
21 Project or reforestation or rehabilitation activity
22 is described by this subparagraph if such Pro-
23 tection Project or reforestation or rehabilitation
24 activity—

25 (i) covers an area of no more than—

1 (I) 2,000 acres within giant se-
2 quia groves; and

3 (II) 3,000 acres on lands identi-
4 fied under section 5(a)(1)(C); and

5 (ii) occurs on Federal land or non-
6 Federal land with the consent of the non-
7 Federal landowner.

8 (D) EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES.—

9 The extraordinary circumstances procedures
10 under provisions (e) through (g) of section 1b.3
11 of title 7, Code of Federal Regulations, shall
12 apply to a Protection Project or reforestation or
13 rehabilitation activity that is categorically ex-
14 cluded under subparagraph (A).

15 (E) USE OF OTHER AUTHORITIES.—To the
16 maximum extent practicable, the Secretary con-
17 cerned shall use the authorities provided under
18 this section in combination with other authori-
19 ties to carry out Protection Projects, includ-
20 ing—

21 (i) good neighbor agreements entered
22 into under section 8206 of the Agricultural
23 Act of 2014 (16 U.S.C. 2113a); and

24 (ii) stewardship contracting projects
25 entered into under section 604 of the

1 Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003
2 (16 U.S.C. 6591c).

3 (F) SAVINGS CLAUSE.—With respect to
4 joint Protection Projects and reforestation and
5 rehabilitation activities involving the Tribe,
6 nothing in this section shall be construed to add
7 any additional regulatory requirements onto the
8 Tribe.

9 (b) IMPLEMENTATION.—To the maximum extent
10 practicable, the Secretary concerned shall reduce haz-
11 ardous fuels in no fewer than 3 giant sequoia groves each
12 year.

13 (c) PUBLIC NOTICE.—The Secretary concerned shall
14 provide notice of each Protection Project on a publicly
15 available website maintained by the Secretary concerned.

16 **SEC. 7. GIANT SEQUOIA REFORESTATION AND REHABILITA-**
17 **TION STRATEGY.**

18 (a) REFORESTATION AND REHABILITATION STRAT-
19 EGY.—

20 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 6 months
21 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-
22 retary, in consultation with the Coalition, shall de-
23 velop and implement a strategy, to be known as the
24 Giant Sequoia Reforestation and Rehabilitation

1 Strategy, to enhance the reforestation and rehabili-
2 tation of giant sequoia groves that—

3 (A) identifies giant sequoia groves in need
4 of reforestation or rehabilitation, giving highest
5 priority to groves identified under section
6 5(a)(1)(A)(i);

7 (B) creates a priority list of reforestation
8 and rehabilitation activities;

9 (C) identifies and addresses—

10 (i) barriers to reforestation or reha-
11 bilitation, including—

12 (I) regulatory and funding bar-
13 riers;

14 (II) seedling shortages or related
15 nursery infrastructure capacity con-
16 straints;

17 (III) labor and workforce short-
18 ages;

19 (IV) technology and science gaps;
20 and

21 (V) site preparation challenges;

22 (ii) potential public-private partner-
23 ship opportunities to complete high-priority
24 reforestation or rehabilitation projects;

1 (iii) a timeline for addressing the
2 backlog of reforestation for giant sequoias
3 in the 10-year period after the agreement
4 is entered into under section 3; and

5 (iv) strategies to ensure genetic diver-
6 sity across giant sequoia groves; and

7 (D) includes program and policy rec-
8 ommendations needed to improve the efficiency
9 or effectiveness of the Strategy.

10 (2) ASSESSMENT.—The Secretary may incor-
11 porate the Strategy into the Assessment under sec-
12 tion 5.

13 (b) PRIORITY REFORESTATION PROJECTS AMEND-
14 MENT.—Section 3(e)(4)(C)(ii)(I) of the Forest and
15 Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974
16 (16 U.S.C. 1601(e)(4)(C)(ii)(I)) is amended—

17 (1) in item (bb), by striking “and”;

18 (2) in item (cc), by striking the period and in-
19 serting “; and”; and

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

21 “(dd) shall include reforest-
22 ation and rehabilitation activities
23 conducted under section 7 of the
24 Save Our Sequoias Act.”.

1 **SEC. 8. GIANT SEQUOIA STRIKE TEAMS.**

2 (a) GIANT SEQUOIA STRIKE TEAMS.—

3 (1) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary con-
4 cerned shall each establish a Giant Sequoia Strike
5 Team to assist the Secretary concerned with the im-
6 plementation of—

7 (A) primarily, section 6; and

8 (B) secondarily, section 7.

9 (2) DUTIES.—Each Strike Team shall—

10 (A) assist the Secretary concerned with
11 any reviews, including analysis under the Na-
12 tional Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42
13 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), consultations under divi-
14 sion A of subtitle III of title 54, United States
15 Code (commonly referred to as the National
16 Historic Preservation Act), and consultations
17 under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16
18 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.);

19 (B) implement any necessary site prepara-
20 tion work in advance of or as part of a Protec-
21 tion Project or reforestation or rehabilitation
22 activity;

23 (C) implement Protection Projects under
24 section 6; and

25 (D) implement reforestation or rehabilita-
26 tion activities under section 7.

1 (3) MEMBERS.—The Secretary concerned may
2 appoint no more than 10 individuals each to serve
3 on a Strike Team comprised of—

4 (A) employees of the Department of the
5 Interior;

6 (B) employees of the Forest Service;

7 (C) private contractors from any nonprofit
8 organization, State government, Tribal Govern-
9 ment, local government, academic institution, or
10 private organization; and

11 (D) volunteers from any nonprofit organi-
12 zation, State government, Tribal Government,
13 local government, academic institution, or pri-
14 vate organization.

15 **SEC. 9. GIANT SEQUOIA COLLABORATIVE RESTORATION**
16 **GRANTS.**

17 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, in consultation
18 with the parties to the agreement under section 3, shall
19 establish a program or expand an existing program to
20 award grants to eligible entities to advance, facilitate, or
21 improve giant sequoia health and resiliency.

22 (b) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The Secretary may award
23 grants under this section to any nonprofit organization,
24 Tribal Government, local government, academic institu-

1 tion, or private organization to help advance, facilitate, or
2 improve giant sequoia health and resiliency.

3 (c) PRIORITY.—In awarding grants under this sec-
4 tion, the Secretary shall give priority to eligible entities
5 that—

6 (1) primarily, are likely to have the greatest im-
7 pact on giant sequoia health and resiliency; and

8 (2) secondarily—

9 (A) are small businesses or Tribal entities,
10 particularly in rural areas; and

11 (B) create or support jobs, particularly in
12 rural areas.

13 (d) USE OF GRANT FUNDS.—Funds from grants
14 awarded under this section shall be used to—

15 (1) create, expand, or develop markets for haz-
16 ardous fuels removed under section 6, including
17 markets for biomass and biochar;

18 (2) facilitate hazardous fuel removal under sec-
19 tion 6, including by reducing the cost of trans-
20 porting hazardous fuels removed as part of a Protec-
21 tion Project;

22 (3) expand, enhance, develop, or create facilities
23 or land that can store or process hazardous fuels re-
24 moved under section 6;

- 1 (4) establish, develop, expand, enhance, or im-
2 prove nursery capacity or infrastructure necessary to
3 facilitate the Strategy established under section 7; or
4 (5) support Tribal management and conserva-
5 tion of giant sequoias, including funding for Tribal
6 historic preservation officers.

7 **SEC. 10. GIANT SEQUOIA INSECT MONITORING AND TECH-**
8 **NOLOGY.**

9 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the
10 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary concerned
11 shall—

12 (1) develop and implement a strategy for moni-
13 toring insects in giant sequoia groves with a high-
14 risk or previous history of insect infestations; and

15 (2) seek to enter into public-private partner-
16 ships to deploy technology to assist in the short-term
17 and long-term monitoring of giant sequoia groves
18 with current or potential insect infestations.

19 (b) REPORT.—Not later than 2 years after the date
20 of enactment of this Act, the Secretary concerned shall
21 submit a report to the relevant Congressional Committees
22 that contains—

23 (1) the strategy required under subsection
24 (a)(1);

1 (2) an update on the effectiveness of the moni-
 2 toring program in preventing or addressing insect
 3 infestations in giant sequoia groves; and

4 (3) program and policy recommendations to
 5 further address—

6 (A) research gaps regarding giant sequoia
 7 resiliency to insects; and

8 (B) opportunities to improve the resiliency
 9 of giant sequoias to insects.

10 **SEC. 11. STEWARDSHIP CONTRACTING FOR GIANT SE-**
 11 **QUOIAS.**

12 (a) NATIONAL PARK SERVICE.—Section 604 of the
 13 Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C.
 14 6591c) is amended—

15 (1) by amending subsection (a)(2) to read as
 16 follows:

17 “(2) DIRECTOR.—The term ‘Director’ means
 18 the Director of the Bureau of Land Management
 19 with respect to Bureau of Land Management lands
 20 and the Director of the National Park Service with
 21 respect to lands within Kings Canyon National
 22 Park, Sequoia National Park, and Yosemite Na-
 23 tional Park.”; and

24 (2) in subsection (b), by striking “national for-
 25 ests and the public lands” and inserting “national

1 forests, public lands, and lands within Kings Canyon
2 National Park, Sequoia National Park, and Yosem-
3 ite National Park”.

4 (b) GIANT SEQUOIA STEWARDSHIP CONTRACTS.—
5 Section 604(c) of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of
6 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6591c(c)) is amended by adding at the
7 end the following:

8 “(8) Promoting the health and resiliency of
9 giant sequoias.”.

10 (c) STEWARDSHIP CONTRACTING IN CERTAIN NA-
11 TIONAL PARKS.—Stewardship contracting projects occur-
12 ring in Kings Canyon National Park, Sequoia National
13 Park, and Yosemite National Park shall be carried out
14 in accordance with the laws (including regulations) appli-
15 cable to the National Park Service, including section
16 100753 of title 54, United States Code.

17 **SEC. 12. GIANT SEQUOIA EMERGENCY PROTECTION PRO-**
18 **GRAM AND FUND.**

19 (a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 1011 of title 54, United
20 States Code, is amended by inserting at the end the fol-
21 lowing:

22 **“§ 101123. Giant Sequoia Emergency Protection Pro-**
23 **gram and Fund**

24 “(a) GIANT SEQUOIA EMERGENCY PROTECTION
25 PROGRAM.—The National Park Foundation, in coordina-

1 tion with the National Forest Foundation and the Foun-
2 dation for America’s Public Lands, shall design and imple-
3 ment a comprehensive program to assist and promote phil-
4 anthropic programs of support that benefit—

5 “(1) primarily, the management and conserva-
6 tion of giant sequoias on covered public lands and
7 covered National Forest System lands to promote re-
8 siliency to wildfires, insects, and drought; and

9 “(2) secondarily, the reforestation of giant se-
10 quoias on covered public lands and covered National
11 Forest System lands impacted by wildfire.

12 “(b) GIANT SEQUOIA EMERGENCY PROTECTION
13 FUND.—

14 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The National Park Foun-
15 dation, in coordination with the National Forest
16 Foundation and the Foundation for America’s Pub-
17 lic Lands, shall establish a joint special account to
18 be known as the Giant Sequoia Emergency Protec-
19 tion Fund (referred to in this section as ‘the Fund’),
20 to be administered in support of the program estab-
21 lished under subsection (a).

22 “(2) FUNDS FOR GIANT SEQUOIA EMERGENCY
23 PROTECTION.—The Fund shall consist of any gifts,
24 devises, or bequests that are provided to the Na-
25 tional Park Foundation, National Forest Founda-

tion, or Foundation for America’s Public Lands for the purpose described in paragraph (1).

“(3) USE OF FUNDS.—Funds shall be available to the National Park Foundation, National Forest Foundation, and Foundation for America’s Public Lands without further appropriation, subject to the provisions in paragraph (4), for projects and activities approved by the Director of the National Park Service, Chief of the Forest Service, or Director of the Bureau of Land Management as appropriate, or their designees, to—

“(A) primarily, support the management and conservation of giant sequoias on covered public lands and covered National Forest System lands to promote resiliency to wildfires, insects, and drought; and

“(B) secondarily, support the reforestation of giant sequoias on covered public lands and covered National Forest System lands impacted by wildfire.

“(4) TRIBAL SUPPORT.—Of the funds provided to the National Park Foundation, National Forest Foundation, and Foundation for America’s Public Lands under paragraph (3), not less than 15 percent of such funds shall be used to support Tribal

1 management and conservation of giant sequoias in-
2 cluding funding for Tribal historic preservation offi-
3 cers.

4 “(c) SUMMARY.—Beginning 1 year after the date of
5 the enactment of this Act, the National Park Foundation,
6 National Forest Foundation, and Foundation for Amer-
7 ica’s Public Lands shall include with their annual reports
8 a summary of the status of the program and Fund created
9 under this section that includes—

10 “(1) a statement of the amounts deposited in
11 the Fund during the fiscal year;

12 “(2) the amount of the balance remaining in
13 the Fund at the end of the fiscal year; and

14 “(3) a description of the program and projects
15 funded during the fiscal year.

16 “(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section, the terms ‘cov-
17 ered public lands’ and ‘covered National Forest System
18 lands’ have the meaning given such terms in section 2 of
19 the Save Our Sequoias Act.

20 “(e) TERMINATION OF EFFECTIVENESS.—The au-
21 thority provided by this section shall terminate 7 years
22 after the date of enactment of the Save Our Sequoias
23 Act.”.

1 (b) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The table of sec-
2 tions for chapter 1011 of title 54, United States Code,
3 is amended by inserting at the end the following:

“101123. Giant Sequoia Emergency Protection Program and Fund.”.

Passed the House of Representatives March 16,
2026.

Attest:

Clerk.

119TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. R. 2709

AN ACT

To improve the health and resiliency of grant
sequoias, and for other purposes.