

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 2860

AN ACT

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,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Northwest Straits Ma-
3 rine Conservation Initiative Reauthorization Act of 2025”.

4 **SEC. 2. REAUTHORIZATION OF NORTHWEST STRAITS MA-
5 RINE CONSERVATION INITIATIVE ACT.**

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

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

12 (2) by striking sections 403, 404, and 405; and

13 (3) by inserting after section 402 the following:

14 **“SEC. 403. DEFINITIONS.**

15 “In this title:

16 “(1) COMMISSION.—The term ‘Commission’
17 means the Northwest Straits Advisory Commission
18 established by section 402.

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

23 “(3) NORTHWEST STRAITS REGION.—The term
24 ‘Northwest Straits region’ means the marine waters
25 of the Strait of Juan de Fuca and of Puget Sound

1 from the Canadian border to the south end of Sno-
2 homish County.

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

14 “(5) UNDER SECRETARY.—The term ‘Under
15 Secretary’ means the Under Secretary of Commerce
16 for Oceans and Atmosphere.

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

18 “(a) COMPOSITION.—

19 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Commission shall be
20 composed of 14 members, except as provided in
21 paragraph (2), who shall be appointed as follows:

22 “(A) One member appointed by a con-
23 sensus of the members of a marine resources
24 committee for San Juan County, Washington.

1 “(B) One member appointed by a con-
2 sensus of the members of a marine resources
3 committee for Island County, Washington.

4 “(C) One member appointed by a con-
5 sensus of the members of a marine resources
6 committee for Skagit County, Washington.

7 “(D) One member appointed by a con-
8 sensus of the members of a marine resources
9 committee for Whatcom County, Washington.

10 “(E) One member appointed by a con-
11 sensus of the members of a marine resources
12 committee for Snohomish County, Washington.

13 “(F) One member appointed by a con-
14 sensus of the members of a marine resources
15 committee for Clallam County, Washington.

16 “(G) One member appointed by a con-
17 sensus of the members of a marine resources
18 committee for Jefferson County, Washington.

19 “(H) Two members appointed by the Sec-
20 retary of the Interior, in coordination with the
21 Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission and in
22 consultation with the Tribal governments af-
23 fected by this title, to represent the interests of
24 such Tribal governments.

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

4 “(J) Four members appointed by the Gov-
5 ernor of the State of Washington who—

6 “(i) are residents of the State of
7 Washington; and

8 “(ii) are not employed by a Federal,
9 State, or local government, excluding an
10 institution of higher education.

11 “(2) ADDITIONAL MEMBERS.—The Commission
12 may, as determined necessary to improve the ability
13 of the Commission to perform the duties of the
14 Commission under section 405(b), appoint members
15 in addition to those appointed under paragraph (1).
16 Any such additional member shall be appointed by
17 a consensus of the members of a marine resources
18 committee that is not described in such paragraph.

19 “(b) VACANCIES.—A vacancy in the Commission
20 shall be filled in the manner in which the original appoint-
21 ment was made.

22 “(c) CHAIRPERSON.—The Commission shall select a
23 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
10 Commission and the Department of Commerce;

11 “(B) to coordinate programs of the Na-
12 tional Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
13 with activities related to the goal of the Com-
14 mission described in section 405(a); and

15 “(C) to perform additional liaison func-
16 tions benefitting the Commission and the Na-
17 tional Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration,
18 which may include, as agreed to by the Com-
19 mission and the National Oceanic and Atmos-
20 pheric Administration, attending meetings and
21 other events of the Commission as a nonvoting
22 participant.

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
9 of 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 pro-
13 tect and restore the marine waters, habitats, and species
14 of the Northwest Straits region to achieve ecosystem
15 health and 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
22 the marine resources of the Northwest Straits re-
23 gion;

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

4 “(4) expanding partnerships with Tribal gov-
5 ernments and continuing to support Tribal treaties,
6 cultures, and subsistence and Tribal treaty rights;
7 and

8 “(5) recognizing the importance of economic
9 and social benefits that are dependent on marine en-
10 vironments and sustainable marine resources.

11 “(b) DUTIES.—The duties of the Commission are the
12 following:

13 “(1) To provide resources and technical support
14 for marine resources committees.

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

21 “(3) To collect marine resources data and iden-
22 tify factors adversely affecting or preventing the res-
23 toration of the health of the marine ecosystem and
24 coastal economies of the Northwest Straits region to
25 inform decisionmakers.

1 “(4) To develop scientifically sound restoration
2 and protection recommendations, informed by local
3 priorities, that address such factors.

4 “(5) To serve as a public forum for the infor-
5 mal discussion of policies and actions, with respect
6 to the marine ecosystem of the Northwest Straits re-
7 gion, of Federal, State, or local governments, Tribal
8 governments, or the Government of Canada.

9 “(6) To inform appropriate authorities and
10 local communities about the marine ecosystem of the
11 Northwest Straits region and about issues relating
12 to the marine ecosystem of the Northwest Straits re-
13 gion.

14 “(7) To consult with all affected Tribal govern-
15 ments in the Northwest Straits region to ensure that
16 the work of the Commission does not violate Tribal
17 treaty rights.

18 “(c) COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION.—The
19 Commission—

20 “(1) shall carry out the duties described in sub-
21 section (b) in coordination and collaboration, as ap-
22 propriate, with Federal, State, and local govern-
23 ments and Tribal governments, including by—

24 “(A) providing technical support and as-
25 sistance to any Tribal government seeking rep-

1 resentation and participation on the Commis-
2 sion; and

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

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

11 “(d) LIMITATIONS.—Nothing in this title provides
12 the Commission with authority to issue regulations or im-
13 plement any Federal law or regulation.

14 “(e) ANNUAL REPORT.—

15 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Each year, the Commission
16 shall prepare, submit to the Committee on Com-
17 merce, Science, and Transportation and the Com-
18 mittee on Appropriations of the Senate, the Com-
19 mittee on Natural Resources and the Committee on
20 Appropriations of the House of Representatives, and
21 the Under Secretary, and make available to the pub-
22 lic a report describing—

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

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

3 “(2) BENCHMARKS.—The benchmarks de-
4 scribed in this paragraph are the following:

5 “(A) Protection and restoration of marine,
6 coastal, and nearshore habitats within the
7 Northwest Straits region.

8 “(B) Protection and restoration of marine
9 resources populations to healthy, sustainable
10 levels.

11 “(C) Improvement of the water quality of
12 the Northwest Straits region.

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

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

21 **“SEC. 406. SUNSET.**

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

1 of the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative
2 Reauthorization Act of 2025.”.

Passed the House of Representatives June 3, 2026.

Attest:

Clerk.

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