

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 4422

To require the adoption and enforcement of regulations to prohibit the intentional feeding of bears on Federal public lands in order to end the hunting practice known as “bear baiting” and reduce the number of dangerous interactions between people and bears.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 15, 2025

Mr. THANEDAR (for himself, Mr. CARSON, Mr. KRISHNAMOORTHY, and Ms. NORTON) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on Agriculture, 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 require the adoption and enforcement of regulations to prohibit the intentional feeding of bears on Federal public lands in order to end the hunting practice known as “bear baiting” and reduce the number of dangerous interactions between people and bears.

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 “Don’t Feed the Bears
5 Act of 2025”.

1 **SEC. 2. PROHIBITION ON FEEDING BEARS ON FEDERAL**
2 **PUBLIC LANDS.**

3 (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

4 (1) Federal land management agencies, includ-
5 ing the Forest Service, National Park Service,
6 United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and Bureau
7 of Land Management, publish and distribute mate-
8 rials to the public discouraging any feeding of black
9 bears.

10 (2) Even though Federal land managers are in
11 agreement that private citizens should not provide
12 food to bears, several Federal land management
13 agencies do not prohibit licensed hunters from set-
14 ting out food as bait for bears on Federal lands in
15 States where baiting is permitted by State law.

16 (3) A typical bait station consists of hundreds
17 of pounds of human-scented foods, often including
18 parts of animal carcasses, pastries, fruits, and
19 grease, that are simply piled on the forest floor or
20 dumped in large drums.

21 (4) The foods used in a bait station are no dif-
22 ferent than the human-scented foods that a bear
23 might find in a garbage can, dump, or campground,
24 and after the bear hunting season ends, bait stations
25 are often not removed.

1 (5) The presence of bait stations on Federal
2 lands allows bears to increase their food intake and
3 results in higher birth rates, increasing bear popu-
4 lations.

5 (6) Wildlife scientists agree that black bears are
6 naturally wary of people, but that feeding bears
7 human-scented foods can cause bears to lose their
8 wariness and become emboldened in approaching
9 people and property in search of food.

10 (7) Human-fed bears cause millions of dollars
11 in property damage every year.

12 (8) Bears habituated to human food can pose
13 a safety threat, occasionally resulting in attacks on
14 human beings.

15 (9) Bears that come into conflict with people
16 are often labeled as nuisance animals, and are often
17 killed as a means of protecting people and property.

18 (10) When the National Park Service adopted
19 policies to ban bear feeding and to end the practice
20 of keeping garbage in open-air dumps, units of the
21 National Park System experienced a dramatic de-
22 cline in bear-human encounters.

23 (11) A majority of the States that allow bear
24 hunting ban baiting, and black bears can be hunted
25 successfully by means other than baiting.

1 (12) It is inconsistent for Federal land manage-
2 ment agencies to demand that visitors to the Federal
3 lands not feed bears, but to allow this practice by
4 bear baiters.

5 (13) The United States already prohibits bait-
6 ing of migratory birds.

7 (b) ENFORCEMENT OF EXISTING NPS REGULA-
8 TION.—The Secretary of the Interior shall enforce the reg-
9 ulatory prohibition, contained in section 2.2(a)(2) of title
10 36, Code of Federal Regulations, against the feeding of
11 wildlife on National Park System lands to prohibit individ-
12 uals from intentionally feeding bears for the purpose of
13 enticing bears to a particular area to be hunted, a practice
14 known as “bear baiting”.

15 (c) ENFORCEMENT OF EXISTING FWS REGULA-
16 TION.—The Secretary of the Interior shall enforce the reg-
17 ulatory prohibition, contained in section 32.2(h) of title
18 50, Code of Federal Regulations, against bear baiting and
19 the baiting of other wildlife on wildlife refuge areas.

20 (d) ADOPTION OF REGULATIONS FOR OTHER PUBLIC
21 LANDS.—

22 (1) REGULATION REQUIRED.—The Secretary of
23 the Interior, with respect to lands administered by
24 the Bureau of Land Management, and the Secretary
25 of Agriculture, with respect to National Forest Sys-

1 tem lands, shall each adopt and enforce a regulation
2 to prohibit individuals from intentionally feeding
3 bears, including feeding for the purpose of enticing
4 bears to a particular area to be hunted, a practice
5 known as “bear baiting”.

6 (2) DEADLINE FOR ADOPTION.—The regula-
7 tions required by this subsection shall be issued in
8 final form not later than one year after the date of
9 the enactment of this Act.

10 (e) EXCEPTION IN EXTRAORDINARY CASES.—The
11 regulations referred to in subsections (b) and (c), and the
12 regulations required by subsection (d), shall provide an ex-
13 ception in extraordinary cases when the Secretary con-
14 cerned determines that bear feeding is required for the
15 welfare of the bear, preservation of public safety, or au-
16 thorized wildlife research.

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