

Calendar No. 211

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1376

To amend the National Trails System Act to direct the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct a study on the feasibility of designating the Benton MacKaye Trail as a national scenic trail.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 9, 2025

Mr. TILLIS (for himself, Mr. WARNOCK, Mr. BUDD, and Mr. OSSOFF) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

OCTOBER 27, 2025

Reported by Mr. BOOZMAN, without amendment

A BILL

To amend the National Trails System Act to direct the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct a study on the feasibility of designating the Benton MacKaye Trail as a national scenic trail.

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 “Benton MacKaye Na-
5 tional Scenic Trail Feasibility Study Act of 2025”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress finds that the Benton MacKaye Trail—

3 (1) is a scenic, nonmotorized trail that traverses
4 approximately 287 miles over some of the most re-
5 nowned forests and mountains in the States of Geor-
6 gia, Tennessee, and North Carolina;

7 (2) showcases a wide variety of scenic views, in-
8 cluding high-elevation peaks, mature forests, and se-
9 cluded waterfalls;

10 (3) passes through wilderness that is rich with
11 biodiversity;

12 (4) passes through six designated Wilderness
13 Areas, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park,
14 and the Chattahoochee-Oconee, Cherokee, and
15 Nantahala National Forests;

16 (5) provides a wide array of easily accessible
17 hikes for novice and intermediate hikers, as well as
18 more challenging trails for backpacking;

19 (6) supports economic opportunities for numer-
20 ous rural communities which benefit from the visi-
21 tors of the trail spending their money on accom-
22 modations, food, and outdoor supplies;

23 (7) runs from Springer Mountain in Georgia,
24 through Tennessee, and extends through the Great
25 Smoky Mountains National Park in North Carolina;

26 (8) is physically accessible; and

1 (9) can be maintained at a minimal cost be-
2 cause—

3 (A) the Benton MacKaye Trail has been
4 maintained at its current length since 2005;

5 (B) 95 percent of the Benton MacKaye
6 Trail is located on Federal land; and

7 (C) the Benton MacKaye Trail has been
8 successfully constructed, maintained, and man-
9 aged by the Benton MacKaye Trail Association
10 since 1980.

11 **SEC. 3. BENTON MACKAYE NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL FEASI-**
12 **BILITY STUDY.**

13 Section 5(c) of the National Trails System Act (16
14 U.S.C. 1244(c)) is amended by adding at the end the fol-
15 lowing:

16 “(50) BENTON MACKAYE TRAIL.—

17 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The Benton MacKaye
18 Trail, a scenic, nonmotorized trail that tra-
19 verses approximately 287 miles in the States of
20 Georgia, Tennessee, and North Carolina.

21 “(B) STUDY.—Not later than 1 year after
22 the date of enactment of this paragraph, the
23 Secretary of Agriculture, in consultation with
24 interested organizations, including the Benton
25 MacKaye Trail Association, shall complete and

1 submit to Congress the feasibility study for des-
2 ignating the Benton MacKaye Trail as a na-
3 tional scenic trail.”.

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