

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1575

To require the Secretary of the Interior to enter into an agreement with the National Academy of Sciences to carry out a study on reservation systems for Federal land.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 1, 2025

Mr. PADILLA introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

A BILL

To require the Secretary of the Interior to enter into an agreement with the National Academy of Sciences to carry out a study on reservation systems for Federal land.

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 “Review and Evaluation
5 of Strategies for Equitable Reservations for Visitor Expe-
6 riences Federal Land Act” or the “RESERVE Federal
7 Land Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

2 In this Act:

3 (1) **BOOKING WINDOW.**—The term “booking
4 window”, with respect to a Federal reservation sys-
5 tem, means the time period during which a reserva-
6 tion or lottery entry is available to the public.

7 (2) **FEDERAL LAND.**—The term “Federal land”
8 means—

9 (A) public lands (as defined in section 103
10 of the Federal Land Policy and Management
11 Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1702));

12 (B) National Forest System land;

13 (C) units of the National Park System;

14 (D) units of the National Wildlife Refuge
15 System;

16 (E) sites administered by the Bureau of
17 Reclamation; and

18 (F) sites administered by the Corps of En-
19 gineers.

20 (3) **FEDERAL RESERVATION SYSTEM.**—

21 (A) **IN GENERAL.**—The term “Federal res-
22 ervation system” means any platform or meth-
23 od used by managers of Federal land to manage
24 the quantity, type, distribution, and timing of
25 recreational activities.

1 (B) INCLUSIONS.—The term “Federal res-
 2 ervation system” includes reservation, permit,
 3 lottery, metering, pricing, merit-based, and
 4 other similar management methods via online,
 5 telephone, paper, in-person, or other methods.

6 (4) RECREATIONAL ACTIVITY.—The term “rec-
 7 reational activity” includes camping, backpacking,
 8 climbing, paddling sports, fishing, hiking, driving,
 9 and other recreational opportunities.

10 (5) SECRETARIES.—The term “Secretaries”
 11 means—

12 (A) the Secretary of the Interior;

13 (B) the Secretary of Agriculture; and

14 (C) the Secretary of the Army, acting
 15 through the Chief of Engineers.

16 **SEC. 3. NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES STUDY OF FED-**
 17 **ERAL RESERVATION SYSTEMS FOR REC-**
 18 **REATIONAL ACTIVITIES ON FEDERAL LAND.**

19 (a) STUDY.—

20 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretaries, acting
 21 jointly, shall, not later than 60 days after the date
 22 of enactment of this Act, enter into an agreement
 23 with the National Academy of Sciences to carry out
 24 a study of Federal reservation systems for rec-
 25 reational activities on Federal land.

1 (2) REQUIREMENTS.—In carrying out the study
2 under paragraph (1), the National Academy of
3 Sciences shall consult with the Secretaries to carry
4 out the following:

5 (A) A review of the history of Federal res-
6 ervation systems, such as recreation.gov, includ-
7 ing a review of—

8 (i) the considerations, including data,
9 that led to the establishment of the appli-
10 cable Federal reservation system;

11 (ii) the iterations of the applicable
12 Federal reservation system over time to
13 meet the needs of the applicable Federal
14 agency;

15 (iii) any visitor feedback provided with
16 respect to the applicable Federal reserva-
17 tion system; and

18 (iv) scientific literature or studies ex-
19 amining the efficacy of Federal reservation
20 systems, including user preferences with
21 respect to Federal reservation system de-
22 sign and implementation.

23 (B) Based on available data and existing
24 research, answer the following questions:

1 (i) What are the benefits and chal-
2 lenges of implementing Federal reservation
3 systems to achieve management goals for
4 Federal land, including resource protec-
5 tion, enjoyable visitor experiences, and sus-
6 tainable operations and facility use?

7 (ii) What data are available, and what
8 additional data are needed, to understand
9 demand for recreation on Federal land?
10 How can the data be used to balance vis-
11 itor management and conservation goals?

12 (iii) What information is available re-
13 garding Federal land users and Federal
14 reservation system users? What informa-
15 tion is available or needs to be collected re-
16 garding demographics and characteristics
17 of successful and unsuccessful applicants
18 using the Federal reservation systems?

19 (iv) Do Federal reservation systems
20 pose a barrier for certain communities, in-
21 cluding international communities, and
22 user groups to access appropriate recre-
23 ation opportunities on Federal land? If so,
24 what is the nature of any barriers identi-
25 fied?

1 (v) What best practices should be con-
2 sidered in Federal reservation system de-
3 sign, including visitation management sys-
4 tem options and booking windows, options
5 to respond to the needs specific to indi-
6 vidual Federal land management units,
7 and equitable access to recreational activi-
8 ties? What metrics can be used to record
9 outcomes of Federal reservation system de-
10 sign?

11 (vi) How have fees been collected for
12 Federal reservation systems over time to
13 meet the needs of the applicable Federal
14 agency? How are the revenues from fees
15 for Federal reservation systems split be-
16 tween, and spent by, Federal land units,
17 Federal agencies, and third-party contrac-
18 tors? How is the fee structure dissemi-
19 nated to users? How could dissemination
20 of information with respect to the fee
21 structure be improved?

22 (vii) What are the odds of success
23 with respect to securing a reservation
24 under Federal reservation systems? How
25 are the odds of success disseminated to

1 users? How could dissemination of infor-
2 mation with respect to the odds of success
3 be improved?

4 (viii) How are data, including data
5 collected by contractors, on Federal res-
6 ervation systems shared with Federal land
7 managers, researchers, and the public?
8 How can transparency be improved to in-
9 form the decision making of users of Fed-
10 eral reservation systems?

11 (ix) How are Federal reservation sys-
12 tems incorporating and adapting to emerg-
13 ing technologies, such as geofencing, bots,
14 or third-party websites monitoring and re-
15 selling reservations? Are Federal reserva-
16 tion systems resilient to cyber threats?

17 (x) How can Federal reservation sys-
18 tems be improved to reduce “no shows”
19 and ensure that recreation sites are being
20 used during periods of high demand?
21 Would an increase in first-come, first-
22 served opportunities increase equitable ac-
23 cess to outdoor recreation on Federal land?

24 (b) REPORT.—The agreement entered into under
25 subsection (a)(1) shall include a requirement that, not

1 later than 18 months after the date on which the agree-
2 ment is entered into, the National Academy of Sciences
3 shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress
4 a report that describes the results of the study carried out
5 under that subsection.

