

119TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. 1788

To amend Public Law 91–378 to authorize activities relating to Civilian Conservation Centers, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 15, 2025

Mr. MERKLEY (for himself, Mr. DAINES, Mr. HICKENLOOPER, Mr. KING, Ms. BALDWIN, and Mr. WYDEN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

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## A BILL

To amend Public Law 91–378 to authorize activities relating to Civilian Conservation Centers, 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,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Civilian Conservation  
5 Center Enhancement Act of 2025”.

6 **SEC. 2. CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CENTERS.**

7 Public Law 91–378 (16 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.) is  
8 amended by adding at the end the following:

1                   **“TITLE III—CIVILIAN**  
2                   **CONSERVATION CENTERS**

3 **“SEC. 301. DEFINITIONS.**

4           “In this title:

5                   “(1) CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CENTER.—The  
6           term ‘Civilian Conservation Center’ means any resi-  
7           dential workforce development or training facility for  
8           underserved youth operated by the Department of  
9           the Interior or the Department of Agriculture.

10                   “(2) COVERED GRADUATE.—The term ‘covered  
11           graduate’ means an individual who successfully com-  
12           pleted a training program at a Civilian Conservation  
13           Center.

14                   “(3) COVERED STUDENT.—The term ‘covered  
15           student’ means an individual who is enrolled in a  
16           training program at a Civilian Conservation Center.

17                   “(4) SECRETARIES.—The term ‘Secretaries’  
18           means—

19                           “(A) the Secretary of Agriculture; and

20                           “(B) the Secretary of the Interior.

21 **“SEC. 302. CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CENTERS WILDFIRE**  
22                   **AND CONSERVATION TRAINING PROGRAM.**

23                   “(a) SPECIALIZED TRAINING PROGRAMS.—The Sec-  
24           retaries, in coordination with the Secretary of Labor, shall

1 offer at Civilian Conservation Centers specialized training  
2 programs focused on—

3 “(1) forestry and rangeland management;

4 “(2) wildland firefighting; or

5 “(3) any other topic relating to the mission of  
6 the Forest Service or the Department of the Interior  
7 or the public interest.

8 “(b) **PRIORITIZATION.**—The Secretaries shall  
9 prioritize offering specialized training programs under  
10 subsection (a) at facilities described in section 147(d) of  
11 the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C.  
12 3197(d)).

13 **“SEC. 303. WILDLAND FIREFIGHTING WORKFORCE DEVEL-**  
14 **OPMENT PILOT.**

15 “(a) **IN GENERAL.**—

16 “(1) **EXPERIMENT, RESEARCH, OR DEMONSTRATION PILOTS.**—The Secretary of Agriculture, in co-  
17 ordination with the Secretary of Labor, may carry  
18 out experimental, research, or demonstration pilots  
19 to provide career and technical education curricula  
20 and course offerings to advance the missions of the  
21 Department of Agriculture at Civilian Conservation  
22 Centers operated by the Department of Agriculture,  
23 including facilities described in section 147(d) of the  
24

1 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (29  
2 U.S.C. 3197(d)).

3 “(2) CURRICULA AND COURSES.—Curricula and  
4 courses described in paragraph (1) include—

5 “(A) incident management and emergency  
6 response logistics;

7 “(B) disaster response;

8 “(C) forest products measurement;

9 “(D) timber sale administration and prepa-  
10 ration;

11 “(E) heavy equipment operation;

12 “(F) equipment and mechanical services;

13 “(G) industrial electrical;

14 “(H) machining;

15 “(I) mill operations;

16 “(J) forest restoration;

17 “(K) habitat and water quality monitoring;

18 “(L) watershed and habitat enhancement;

19 “(M) range management;

20 “(N) recreation access improvement;

21 “(O) volunteers and visitors enhancement;

22 and

23 “(P) historic preservation.

24 “(b) REQUIREMENTS.—In carrying out subsection  
25 (a), the Secretary of Agriculture shall—

1           “(1) identify workforce needs in public land  
2 agencies, forest, conservation, and recreation indus-  
3 tries, and rural communities, after consulting with  
4 State governments and agencies, Federal emergency  
5 management and public land agencies, local commu-  
6 nities, institutions of higher education, and Indian  
7 Tribes;

8           “(2) develop marketing, recruitment, and reten-  
9 tion materials for the curricula and courses offerings  
10 provided under subsection (a); and

11           “(3) provide specialized staff necessary to teach  
12 curricula and courses offerings provided under sub-  
13 section (a), to the extent practicable.

14 **“SEC. 304. WILDLAND FIREFIGHTING WORKFORCE EN-**  
15 **HANCEMENT.**

16           “(a) RECRUITMENT GOALS AND INVESTMENTS.—

17           “(1) RECRUITMENT GOAL.—The Secretaries—

18           “(A) shall each set goals of—

19           “(i) hiring 300 covered graduates an-  
20 nually to contribute to wildland firefighting  
21 or other critical workforce needs within the  
22 respective Department of each of the Sec-  
23 retaries;

24           “(ii) a certain percentage of covered  
25 graduates annually attaining employment

1           within the wildland firefighting, natural re-  
2           sources, forestry, or a related field; and

3                   “(iii) a certain percentage of covered  
4           graduates annually attaining employment;  
5           and

6                   “(B) may make investments to support the  
7           recruitment, training, hiring, and retention of  
8           covered graduates.

9           “(2) SIGNING BONUS.—The Secretaries may  
10          provide for a signing bonus to enable the successful  
11          employment and transition of covered graduates, in-  
12          cluding for the purpose of securing housing in rural  
13          and remote communities.

14          “(b) DIRECT HIRE AUTHORITY.—For fiscal year  
15          2025 and each fiscal year thereafter, the Secretaries may  
16          appoint, without regard to the provisions of subchapter I  
17          of chapter 33 of title 5, United States Code, other than  
18          sections 3303 and 3328 of that title, a covered graduate  
19          directly to a position for which the covered graduate meets  
20          Office of Personnel Management qualification standards.

21          “(c) PATHWAYS TO EMPLOYMENT.—The Secretaries  
22          shall ensure that appropriate career pathways are devel-  
23          oped for covered graduates of relevant Civilian Conserva-  
24          tion Center training programs.



1 housing for wildland firefighters, volunteers, partner  
2 crewmembers, interns, and other agency employees;

3 “(2) identify areas where the construction of  
4 new housing described in paragraph (1) would be  
5 appropriate and sustainable; and

6 “(3) submit to Congress a prioritized list of  
7 projects for renovation with a plan for how the Sec-  
8 retaries will employ covered students to repair, ren-  
9 ovate, and remediate the properties identified under  
10 paragraph (1).

11 **“SEC. 306. REPORT.**

12 “Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment  
13 of this title, the Secretaries shall submit to the Committee  
14 on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate and  
15 the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representa-  
16 tives a report—

17 “(1) describing underutilized capacity at Civil-  
18 ian Conservation Centers, based on an assessment  
19 conducted by the Secretaries; and

20 “(2) identifying the investments, improvements,  
21 and efficiencies necessary to utilize the full capacity  
22 of Civilian Conservation Centers.”.

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