

117TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

**S.** \_\_\_\_\_

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

Mr. MERKLEY (for himself and Mr. DAINES) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on

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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 2022”.

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           disadvantaged youth operated by the Department of  
9           the Interior or the Department of Agriculture on  
10          Federal land.

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

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

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

20                           “(A) the Secretary of Agriculture; and

21                           “(B) the Secretary of the Interior.

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

24           “(a) SPECIALIZED TRAINING PROGRAMS.—The Sec-  
25          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 Secretaries, in coordination with  
17 the Secretary of Labor, may carry out experimental,  
18 research, or demonstration pilots to provide career  
19 and technical education curricula and course offer-  
20 ings to advance the missions of the Department of  
21 the Interior and the Department of Agriculture at  
22 Civilian Conservation Centers, including facilities de-  
23 scribed in section 147(d) of the Workforce Innova-  
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1 tion and Opportunity Act (29 U.S.C. 3197(d)), on  
2 Federal land west of the 100th meridian.

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) visitor services; and

22 “(P) historic preservation.

23 “(b) REQUIREMENTS.—In carrying out subsection  
24 (a), the Secretaries 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, and Indian Tribes;

7           “(2) develop marketing and recruitment mate-  
8 rials for the curricula and courses offerings provided  
9 under subsection (a); and

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

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

15           “(a) RECRUITMENT GOALS AND INVESTMENTS.—

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

17           “(A) shall each set a goal of hiring 300  
18 covered graduates annually to contribute to  
19 wildland firefighting or other critical workforce  
20 needs; and

21           “(B) may make investments to support the  
22 recruitment, training, hiring, and retention of  
23 covered graduates.

24           “(2) SIGNING BONUS.—The Secretaries may  
25 provide for a signing bonus to enable the successful

1 employment and transition of covered graduates, in-  
2 cluding for the purpose of securing housing in rural  
3 and remote communities.

4 “(b) DIRECT HIRE AUTHORITY.—For fiscal year  
5 2023 and each fiscal year thereafter, the Secretaries may  
6 appoint, without regard to the provisions of subchapter I  
7 of chapter 33 of title 5, United States Code, other than  
8 sections 3303 and 3328 of that title, a covered graduate  
9 directly to a position for which the covered graduate meets  
10 Office of Personnel Management qualification standards.

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

15 “(d) DISADVANTAGED YOUTH EMPLOYMENT.—Not-  
16 withstanding any other provision of law, the Secretaries  
17 may employ or otherwise contract with covered students  
18 at regular rates of pay for necessary hours of work.

19 **“SEC. 305. WILDLAND FIREFIGHTING HOUSING PILOT PRO-**  
20 **GRAM.**

21 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretaries shall establish  
22 a pilot program to employ covered students to improve and  
23 expand the housing stock owned by the Federal Govern-  
24 ment for the purpose of housing wildland firefighters and  
25 other agency employees.

1           “(b) REQUIREMENTS.—In carrying out the pilot pro-  
2 gram under subsection (a), the Secretaries shall—

3           “(1) identify properties currently owned by the  
4 Federal Government that would be appropriate  
5 housing for wildland firefighters and other agency  
6 employees;

7           “(2) identify areas where the construction of  
8 new housing described in paragraph (1) would be  
9 appropriate and sustainable; and

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

15 **“SEC. 306. REPORT.**

16           “Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment  
17 of this title, the Secretaries shall submit to the Committee  
18 on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate and the  
19 Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Rep-  
20 resentatives a report—

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

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