



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
NATURAL RESOURCES
CHAIRMAN BRUCE WESTERMAN

To: House Committee on Natural Resources Republican Members
From: Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife and Fisheries staff: Annick Miller (annick.miller@mail.house.gov), Doug Levine (doug.levine@mail.house.gov), Kirby Struhar (kirby.struhar@mail.house.gov), and Thomas Shipman (thomas.shipman@mail.house.gov) x5-8331
Date: Monday, June 23, 2025
Subject: Legislative Hearing on 4 Bills

The Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife and Fisheries will hold a legislative hearing on four bills: H.R. 1676 (Rep. Donalds), “*Make SWAPs Efficient Act of 2025*”; H.R. 3538 (Rep. Garbarino) “*Wildlife Confiscations Network Act of 2025*”; H.R. 3857 (Rep. Hurd), “*Snow Water Supply Forecasting Reauthorization Act of 2025*”; and H.R. 3858 (Rep. Dingell), “*Sport Fish Restoration, Recreational Boating Safety, and Wildlife Restoration Act of 2025*” on **Tuesday, June 24, 2025, at 10:15 a.m. in Room 1324 Longworth House Office Building.**

Member offices are requested to notify Jackson Renfro (jackson.renfro@mail.house.gov) by 4:30 p.m. on Monday, June 23, 2025, if their Member intends to participate in the hearing.

I. KEY MESSAGES

- House Committee on Natural Resources Republicans are holding a legislative hearing on four bills that streamline bureaucratic processes, expand protections for animals rescued from the illegal wildlife trade, ensure access to the most up-to-date scientific data in water management, and promote recreational activities on our nation’s waters.
- H.R. 1676 furthers the Trump administration’s desire to promote government efficiency¹ by approving State Wildlife Action Plans in a timely manner.
- H.R. 3538 provides accountability for, and greater oversight of, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s efforts to take care of wildlife seized by law enforcement investigating trafficking or other illegal activities.
- H.R. 3857 reauthorizes a critical program that empowers water managers to make decisions based upon the best available science.
- H.R. 3858 bolsters America’s outdoor recreation economy by reauthorizing and reforming the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund.

¹ [EO 14158](#)

II. WITNESSES

Panel I

- **Members of Congress TBD**

Panel II

- **Mr. David Miko**, Acting Deputy Director of Operations, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, DC [H.R. 1676, H.R. 3538 and H.R. 3858]

Panel III

- **Mr. Roger Young**, Executive Director, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Tallahassee, Florida [H.R. 1676]
- **Mr. Craig Hoover**, Executive Vice President, Association of Zoos and Aquariums, Bethesda, Maryland [H.R. 3538]
- **Ms. Candice Hasenyager**, Director of the Utah Division of Water Resources, Salt Lake City, Utah [H.R. 3857]
- **Mr. Michael Shields**, President, American Fishing Wire, Coatesville, Pennsylvania [H.R. 3858] (*Minority Witness*)

III. BACKGROUND

[H.R. 1676 \(Rep. Donalds\), “Make SWAPs Efficient Act of 2025”](#)

In 2000, Congress amended the Pittman-Robertson Act to include a subaccount known as the Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Account (Account).² This Account provides appropriated funding to states and territories for wildlife restoration and conservation.³ The Program funds must be used “for the development, revision, and implementation of wildlife conservation and restoration plans and programs.”⁴

These plans, known as State Wildlife Action Plans (SWAPs), serve as a blueprint for identifying each state’s and territory’s unique conservation needs. Congress required each SWAP to provide information addressing eight elements: 1) distribution and abundance of wildlife species; 2) locations and condition of key habitats and community types; 3) wildlife and habitat threats; 4) conservation actions to address these threats; 5) plans for monitoring species, habitats and the effectiveness of conservation actions; 6) plans for review and adaptive management of the strategy; 7) plans to coordinate strategy development, implementation, and review with federal, state, local agencies, and Indian tribes; and 8) opportunities for broad public participation in plan development and implementation.⁵

² “The Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act.” Congressional Research Service. October 12, 2022. https://www.congress.gov/crs_external_products/IF/PDF/IF12229/IF12229.1.pdf.

³ *Id.*

⁴ Public Law 106-553, Federal Funding Fiscal Year 2001. <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/PLAW-106publ553/pdf/PLAW-106publ553.pdf>.

⁵ *Id.* “The Eight Required Elements to include in Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plans (State Wildlife Action Plans).” Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. https://www.fishwildlife.org/application/files/5815/7125/4229/SWAP_Eight_Required_Elements.pdf.

In 2000, Congress also created the State Wildlife Grant Program (SWGP) to provide funding to state and territory fish and wildlife agencies to implement their SWAPs.⁶ The apportionment formula is one-third based on the total land area of the state and two-thirds based on each state's population.⁷ By law, states must have an updated SWAP to receive funding through the SWGP. These SWAPs must be updated every ten years. 44 states, the District of Columbia, and three territories are up for renewal in 2025.⁸

In the past, the approval process for SWAPs has taken as long as 18 months due to bureaucratic delays at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service). To help address these delays and the upcoming increase of SWAPs for review, in December of 2024, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and the Service entered into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to encourage more timely reviews of SWAPs⁹ and worked together to develop a simplified review procedure.¹⁰

H.R. 1676, introduced by Representative Byron Donalds (R-FL-19), follows up on work done through the MOU by directing the Secretary of the Interior to approve SWAPs within 180 days of submission. If the Secretary does not approve the SWAP within 180 days, the SWAP is automatically deemed approved. The bill has bipartisan support.

H.R. 3538 (Rep. Garbarino), “Wildlife Confiscations Network Act of 2025”

In 2023, the Service partnered with the Association of Zoos and Aquariums (AZA) to launch a pilot program in southern California known as the “Wildlife Confiscations Network” (the Network).¹¹ The Network provides “a coordinated response for the care and well-being of wildlife confiscated from illegal trade.”¹² From 2015 to 2019, the Service confiscated 48,793 individual animals involved in illegal wildlife trade, each of which needed to be



A turtle that was rescued from illegal trade by the Wildlife Confiscation Network. **Source:** Association of Zoos and Aquariums.

⁶ “The State and Tribal Wildlife Grant Programs: 20 Years of Conservation Success.” September 2020, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. https://www.fishwildlife.org/application/files/2616/0087/6829/STWG_2020_Report_Final.pdf.

⁷ “About State Wildlife Action Plans.” Origins of the State Wildlife Action Plans. University of Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment. https://seas.umich.edu/ecomgt/swap/About_SWAPs.html.

⁸ “State Wildlife Action Plans 2025 Revisions.” Wildlife for All. https://wildlifeforall.us/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Wildlifeforall_SWAP_2025_Revision_List.pdf.

⁹ “Memorandum.” Paul Rauch and Judy Camuso. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. December 9, 2024. https://www.fishwildlife.org/application/files/4817/4024/5170/SWAP_Comprehensive_Review_2025_Joint_Memo_Signed_Dec_9-2024-FINAL.pdf.

¹⁰ “SWAP Summary Template” U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. <https://fawiki.fws.gov/spaces/WSFRP/pages/26837115/State+Wildlife+Grant+Program?preview=/26837115/344096773/SWAP%20Summary%20Template.xlsx>.

¹¹ “U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Association of Zoos and Aquariums announce pilot network in southern California to provide care and welfare for animals confiscated from illegal trade.” U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. October 27, 2023. <https://www.fws.gov/press-release/2023-10/new-network-gives-hope-animals-trafficked-through-illegal-wildlife-trade>.

¹² *Id.*

housed after seizure.¹³ According to AZA, since the Network was established, it has assisted with over 135 wildlife trafficking cases in southern California and housed over 4,100 animals in qualified facilities.¹⁴

Sponsored by Representatives Andrew Garbarino (R-NY-02) and Mike Quigley (D-IL-05), H.R. 3538 would authorize a nationwide program modeled on the Network's work in southern California. The Service would administer the national Network and would assist federal wildlife law enforcement agencies, such as the Service, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, with placing confiscated animals in a qualified facility. A committee would be established to review applications from facilities that wish to join the Network. The committee would be made up of representatives from the Service and various animal care facilities, including zoos and aquariums.

Specifically, the functions of the Network would be to: 1) establish response protocols for confiscated animals; 2) create and maintain a database of qualified facilities to house confiscated animals; 3) establish a committee to review an application for facilities that seek inclusion in the Network; and 4) act as the point of contact for federal wildlife law enforcement agencies to assist in housing confiscated animals.

H.R. 3538 would authorize \$5 million per year to administer the program through Fiscal Year (FY) 2030.

H.R. 3857 (Rep. Hurd), “Snow Water Supply Forecasting Reauthorization Act of 2025”

Established in 2020 by the Snow Water Supply Forecasting Program Authorization Act,¹⁵ the Snow Water Supply Forecasting Program (SWSFP) encourages the use of emerging technologies to enhance snow monitoring and subsequent water supply forecasts.

The program is administered by the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) and provides cost-sharing on a competitive basis for a broad range of participants to conduct snow monitoring and water supply forecasting projects.

In 2021, Reclamation submitted a report to Congress that described how it would coordinate the deployment of new technologies to monitor



Snowpack in Glacier National Park. **Source:** Daily Inter Lake.

¹³ “Wildlife Confiscation Network Act.” Association of Zoos and Aquarium. <https://www.aza.org/wildlife-confiscations-network-act#:~:text=From%202015%20to%202019%2C%20the,each%20requiring%20placement%20and%20care.>

¹⁴ “Wildlife Confiscations Network Act of 2025 introduced to House of Representatives with endorsement of 60 organizations.” Association of Zoos and Aquariums. May 22, 2025. <https://www.aza.org/aza-news-releases/posts/wildlife-confiscations-network-act-introduced-to-house-of-representatives.>

¹⁵ H.R. 8041. Snow Water Supply Forecasting Program Authorization Act. <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/8041.>

snowpack. After submitting the report, Reclamation began targeted implementation of this effort by expanding remote sensing pilots like Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) and satellite imagery.¹⁶ Accurate models and water supply forecasts are essential in the western United States, where over half of the annual stream flow is sourced from snowmelt runoff.¹⁷ Reclamation's 2021 report to Congress detailed ten emerging technologies that, at the time of publication, were not widely used but were predicted to mature enough to be usable in water supply forecasts within five years.¹⁸

These technologies were rooted in air- and space-based technologies, ground-based technologies, and modeling platforms. Air- and space-based technologies include aircraft-mounted LiDAR, which precisely maps snow depth and can be used to predict information on how much water is being held as snow. This can be paired with various methods of satellite imagery.¹⁹ These imagery methods can help construct 3D models, providing accurate information about snow depth and how clean or dirty the snow is, which affects how quickly it melts.²⁰ From the ground, net radiometers measure energy from the sun and ground heat, which can be used to improve science.²¹ The Snow Water Supply Forecasting Program also takes advantage of advanced modeling systems like the Snow Data Assimilation System (SNODAS) that combines observation technology and weather modeling to predict snowfall across the United States. A web of different modeling systems, like SNODAS and the Snow Water Artificial Neural Network, a machine learning system used to estimate precipitation data,²² combined with ground- and air-based technologies provide Reclamation with accurate, up-to-date information and data to conduct snow monitoring and water supply forecasting. This allows water managers to make effective decisions and provides greater certainty to end users.

H.R. 3857, which is sponsored by Representatives Jeff Hurd (R-CO-03) and Joe Neguse (D-CO-02), reauthorizes the Snow Water Supply Forecasting Program at existing funding levels through FY 2031.

H.R. 3858, (Rep. Dingell), “Sport Fish Restoration, Recreational Boating Safety, and Wildlife Restoration Act of 2025”

Created in 1950 with the passage of the Dingell-Johnson Sport Fishing Restoration Act, the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund (SFRBTF) supports a diverse array of projects, including habitat restoration, hatchery maintenance, and the construction of boat ramps in all 50 states and five territories.²³ SFRBTF funding originally came from federal excise taxes on recreational fishing equipment.²⁴ However, by the late 1970s, demand for projects had begun to

¹⁶ Emerging Technologies in Snow Monitoring; A Report to Congress. Bureau of Reclamation. November 2021. https://www.usbr.gov/research/docs/news/Emerging_Snow_Monitoring_Report_508.pdf.

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ *Id.*

²⁰ *Id.*

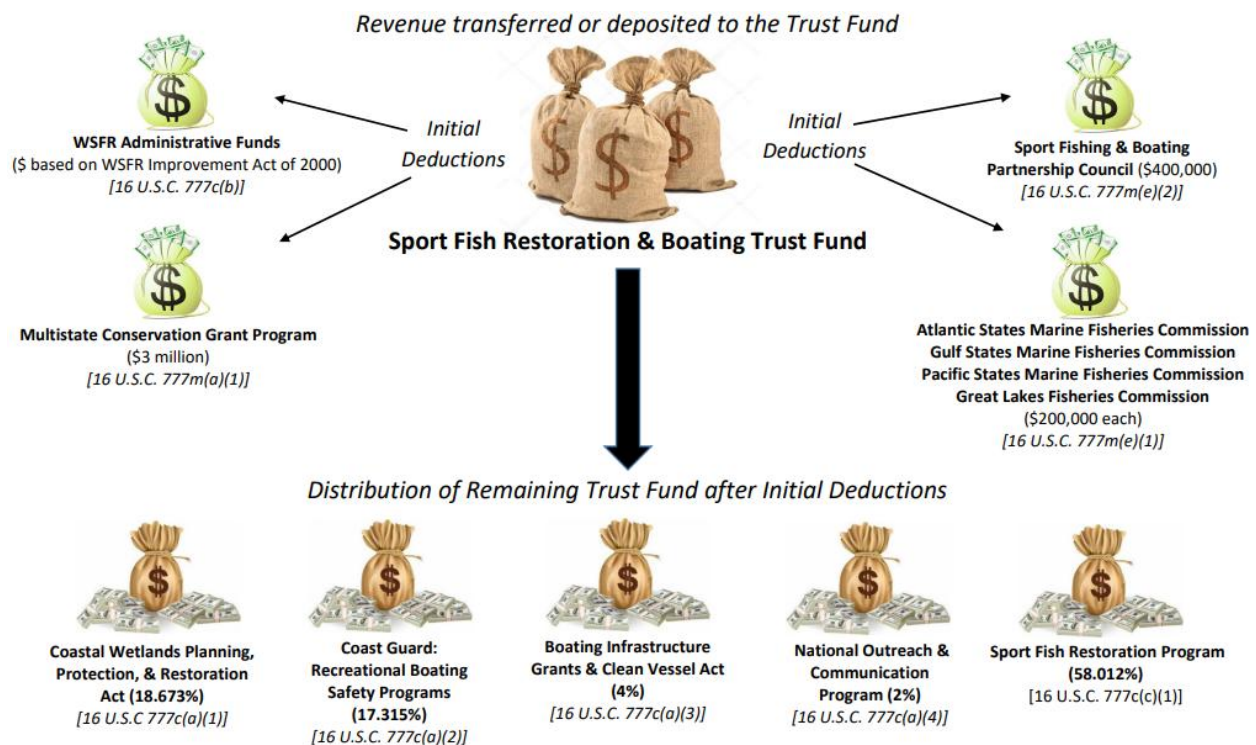
²¹ *Id.*

²² *Id.*

²³ “Sport Fish Restoration.” The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. <https://www.fws.gov/program/sport-fish-restoration>. “Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund. American Sportfishing Association.” <https://asafishing.org/sport-fish-restoration-and-boating-trust-fund/>.

²⁴ “Sport Fish Restoration Program Reports.” Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission. August 9, 2022. <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/inport/item/35346>.

outpace available funding.²⁵ To increase revenue, Congress passed the Wallop-Breaux Amendment in 1984, which expanded the range of taxable tackle and sport fishing equipment and added a federal tax on fuel used by motorboats and small engines.²⁶



Distribution of funds from the SFRBTF. **Source:** U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Led by Representatives Debbie Dingell (D-MI-06) and Rob Wittman (R-VA-01), H.R. 3858 would reauthorize the SFRBTF through FY 2031. Under current law, the authorization for the fund would expire at the end of FY 2026. Additionally, the bill would make technical improvements to enhance the program's efficiency. Specifically, H.R. 3858 would reduce the tax on aerated bait buckets from 10 percent to 3 percent. When sold as a unit, aerated bait buckets are currently subject to a 10 percent excise tax. However, when sold as separate components, an aerator and a bucket are not subject to an excise tax.²⁷ The proposed change would reduce the competitive disadvantage faced by manufacturers of aerated bait buckets and enable more competitive pricing.

H.R. 3858 would also change the annual apportionment for the four Interstate Fisheries Commissions (Atlantic States, Gulf States, Pacific States, and Great Lakes) from a flat amount to a percentage. Despite inflation and the growth of the SFRBTF, the \$200,000 annual allocation to each commission has remained flat since the 1980s, diminishing their respective purchasing power.²⁸ The bill proposes that each commission receive 0.0375 percent of the annual appropriation, which, based on the fund's value in recent years, would equate to an amount

²⁵ *Id.*

²⁶ *Id.*

²⁷ "Proposed Changes for Next Reauthorization of Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund." Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. https://naturalresources.house.gov/uploadedfiles/updated_sfrbtf_one_page.pdf.

²⁸ *Id.*

between \$250,000 and \$275,000 annually.²⁹ With increased funding, the commissions would be able to address issues like aquatic invasive species and revive important habitat work that benefits coastal fisheries.

Lastly, H.R. 3858 would expand domestic fuel options for boaters. This change would add an additional priority section under the Boating Infrastructure Grant program for alternative marine fuel facilities, which use fuels derived from sources like cooking oil waste, animal fats, and plant-based materials. Such a change would both boost applications for projects that include alternative fuel facilities and provide boaters with more domestic fuel options.

IV. MAJOR PROVISIONS & ANALYSIS

H.R. 1676 (Rep. Donalds), “Make SWAPs Efficient Act of 2025”

Section 2. Timing of Approval of Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program.

- Requires the Service to approve or deny SWAPs within 180 days of being submitted.
- If a SWAP is not approved or denied within 180 days of being submitted, the SWAP is automatically deemed approved.

H.R. 3538 (Rep. Garbarino), “Wildlife Confiscations Network Act of 2025”

Section 4. Wildlife Confiscations Network.

- Establishes a voluntary, cooperative program to assist federal wildlife law enforcement agencies with the placement and care of confiscated animals.
- Establishes a committee within this program to review facilities’ applications to be a part of the “Wildlife Confiscation Network” to house confiscated animals.

Section 5. Authorization of Appropriations.

- Authorizes \$5 million a year to administer the program through FY 2030.

H.R. 3857 (Rep. Hurd), “Snow Water Supply Forecasting Reauthorization Act of 2025”

Section 2. Snow Water Supply Forecasting Program.

- Reauthorizes the Snow Water Supply Forecasting Program at existing funding levels through FY 2031.

H.R. 3858 (Rep. Dingell), “Sport Fish Restoration, Recreational Boating Safety, and Wildlife Restoration Act of 2025”

Section 2. Division of Annual Appropriations.

- Reauthorizes the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund through FY2031.

²⁹ *Id.*

Section 3. Funding for Interstate Fisheries Commission Activities.

- Switches apportionments for the four Interstate Fisheries Commissions from a flat \$200,000 per year to 0.0375% of the annual appropriation of the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund.

Section 4. Boating Infrastructure Priorities.

- Adds alternative marine fuels to the priority's subsection of the Boating Infrastructure Grant program.

Section 5. Three Percent Rate for Portable, Electronically-Aerated Bait Containers.

- Reduces the tax on aerated bait buckets from ten percent to three percent.

V. COST

A formal cost estimate from the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) is not yet available for any of the bills.

VI. ADMINISTRATION POSITION

The Trump administration's position on any of the bills is unknown at this time.

VII. EFFECT ON CURRENT LAW

[H.R. 1676](#)

[H.R. 3857](#)

[H.R. 3858](#)