



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
NATURAL RESOURCES
CHAIRMAN BRUCE WESTERMAN

To: House Committee on Natural Resources Republican Members
From: House Committee on Natural Resources Republican Staff
Date: Monday, July 14, 2025
Subject: Markup of 12 bills

The House Committee on Natural Resources will hold a markup on **Tuesday, July 15, 2025, at 10:15 a.m.**, in room 1324 Longworth House Office Building. The bills to be considered include: H.R. 281 (Rep. Hageman); H.R. 435 (Rep. Issa); H.R. 556 (Rep. Wittman); H.R. 831 (Rep. Calvert); H.R. 1676 (Rep. Donalds); H.R. 1809 (Rep. Quigley); H.R. 2293 (Rep. Ezell); H.R. 2405 (Rep. Barr); H.R. 2462 (Rep. Rose); H.R. 2860 (Rep. Larsen); H.R. 3187 (Rep. Hill); and H.R. 3858 (Rep. Dingell).

Member offices are requested to notify Madeline Kelley (Madeline.Kelley@mail.house.gov) by 4:30 p.m. on Monday, July 14, 2025, to confirm their Member's attendance at the markup.

I. KEY MESSAGES & TOPLINE ACTIONS

- Bills expected to move by regular order: H.R. 281 (Rep. Hageman), "*Grizzly Bear State Management Act of 2025*"; H.R. 556 (Rep. Wittman), "*Protecting Access for Hunters and Anglers Act of 2025*"; and H.R. 2462 (Rep. Rose), "*Black Vulture Relief Act of 2025*".
- Please note that H.R. 281, H.R. 556, and H.R. 2462 will each have an amendment in the nature of a substitute (ANS). Members should ensure that amendments are drafted to the ANS.
- Bills expected to move by unanimous consent: H.R. 435 (Rep. Issa), "*Direct Hire To Fight Fires*"; H.R. 831 (Rep. Calvert), "*Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program Amendment Act of 2025*"; H.R. 1676 (Rep. Donalds), "*Make SWAPs Efficient Act of 2025*"; H.R. 1809 (Rep. Quigley), "*Great Lakes Fishery Research Reauthorization Act*"; H.R. 2293 (Rep. Ezell), "*Cormorant Relief Act of 2025*"; H.R. 2405 (Rep. Barr), "*The White Oak Resilience Act*"; H.R. 2860 (Rep. Larsen) "*Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative Reauthorization Act of 2025*"; H.R. 3187 (Rep. Hill), To require the Secretary of Agriculture to convey a parcel of property of the Forest Service to Perry County, Arkansas, and for other purposes.; and H.R. 3858 (Rep. Dingell), "*Sport Fish Restoration, Recreational Boating Safety, and Wildlife Restoration Act of 2025*".

II. EXPECTED LEGISLATION

H.R. 281 (Rep. Hageman), “*Grizzly Bear State Management Act of 2025*”

This bill would require the Department of the Interior (DOI) to reissue the final rule entitled “Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Removing the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem Population of Grizzly Bears from the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife” (82 Fed. Reg. 30502 (June 30, 2017)). In January 2025, the Biden administration rejected the state-led delisting petitions, opted to maintain protections through a nationally unified distinct population segment, and extended public comment through March 2025.¹

H.R. 281 is identical to H.R. 1245 from the 118th Congress, which passed the House Committee on Natural Resources by a vote of 21-17. Hearing information for that bill, including testimony, may be viewed [here](#), and the hearing memo may be viewed [here](#).

Staff contact: Doug Levine (Doug.Levine@mail.house.gov).

H.R. 435 (Rep. Issa), “*Direct Hire to Fight Fires*”

Each year, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and DOI hire thousands of wildland firefighters. Due to the seasonal nature of the job, the agencies must undergo intense recruiting and retention activities annually. The federal government application and hiring process can be burdensome. To streamline the process, in past years, the USFS and DOI have received limited, temporary direct hire authority (DHA) from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). DHA is an authority granted by OPM temporarily to a federal agency when there is a critical need for hiring or when a severe shortage of candidates exists.² DHA expedites hiring by removing competitive rating and ranking, preferences for certain candidates, and requirements to consider the top three candidates for each position.³ In previous years, the average amount of time it took to hire an employee using Fire DHA was 58 days, compared to the average hiring time when not using Fire DHA of 96 days.⁴

H.R. 435, the “Direct Hire to Fight Fires” Act, would give the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior permanent DHA to hire qualified candidates on an expedited basis. This would apply broadly to several roles that serve in firefighting or firefighting support capacities. The bill also directs USFS and DOI to identify policies and propose changes to reduce the time and complexity of hiring wildland firefighters and support personnel. Finally, this legislation requires the agencies to regularly report to Congress on the status of their wildland firefighting

¹ “Press Release: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Proposes Update to Grizzly Bear Endangered Species Act Listing and Management” U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, January 8, 2025, <https://www.fws.gov/press-release/2025-01/usfws-proposes-update-grizzly-bear-esa-listing-management>.

² Direct Hire Authority, Office of Personnel Management, Accessed May 18, 2023, <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/hiring-information/direct-hire-authority/#url=Fact-Sheet>.

³ *Id.*

⁴ Data provided by the Forest Service to Committee Staff via email.

hiring efforts. During the 118th Congress, an identical version of this legislation was passed unanimously by the Committee on Natural Resources.⁵

Hearing information, including testimony, may be viewed [here](#), and the hearing memo may be viewed [here](#).

Staff contact: Aniela Butler (Aniela@mail.house.gov) and Brandon Miller (Brandon.Miller@mail.house.gov).

H.R. 556 (Rep. Wittman), “*Protecting Access for Hunters and Anglers Act of 2025*”

H.R. 556 would prohibit the Secretaries of the Interior and Agriculture from banning the use of lead ammunition or tackle on federal land or water that is under their respective jurisdictions and made available for hunting or fishing activities. In addition, the Secretaries may not issue regulations relating to the level of lead in ammunition or tackle to be used on federal land or water. The bill allows the Secretaries to prohibit the use of lead in a particular unit of federal land or water if the relevant Secretary determines that a decline in wildlife population at that specific unit is primarily caused by the use of lead in ammunition or tackle, and if the prohibition is consistent with state law, or state fish and wildlife policy, or regulations governing that unit.

H.R. 556 is identical to H.R. 615 from the 118th Congress, which passed the House Committee on Natural Resources by a vote of 21-15. Hearing information on that bill, including testimony, may be viewed [here](#), and the hearing memo may be viewed [here](#).

Staff contact: Doug Levine (Doug.Levine@mail.house.gov).

H.R. 831 (Rep. Calvert), “*Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program Amendment Act of 2025*”

H.R. 831 would establish an interest-bearing account within the U.S. Department of the Treasury for unexpended, non-federal contributions to the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program. The Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program was authorized by Congress in 2009 and aims to protect native fish populations and increase habitat for migratory birds.⁶ The program’s budget for the 50-year term of its authorization was \$626 million, with the federal government contributing 50 percent of the funding and the three lower Colorado River Basin states providing the remainder (with California paying 25 percent, and Arizona and Nevada each paying 12.5 percent).⁷

⁵ H.R. 3499, Direct Hire to Fight Fires Act, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/3499/all-actions?overview=closed#tabs>.

⁶ “Reps. Calvert and Napolitano Introduce Bill to Support the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program.” Rep. Ken Calvert. September 10, 2024. <https://calvert.house.gov/media/press-releases/rebs-calvert-and-napolitano-introduce-bill-support-lower-colorado-river-multi>.

⁷ *Id.*

As drafted, H.R. 831 is identical to H.R. 9515 from the 118th Congress. Hearing information on that bill, including testimony, may be viewed [here](#), and the hearing memo may be viewed [here](#).

An amendment will be offered to make the interest earned subject to appropriations, in order to avoid a mandatory spending score.

Staff contact: Annick Miller (Annick.Miller@mail.house.gov) and Doug Levine (Doug.Levine@mail.house.gov).

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

State Wildlife Action Plans (SWAPs), serve as a blueprint for identifying each state’s and territory’s unique conservation needs. By law, states must have an updated SWAP to receive funding through the State Wildlife Grant Program. SWAPs must be updated every ten years. Forty-four states, the District of Columbia, and three territories are up for renewal in 2025.⁸ To help prevent delays and address the upcoming increase of SWAPs for review, the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) entered into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) in December 2024 to encourage more timely reviews of SWAPs.⁹ The two entities also 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.

An ANS will be offered at markup requiring the Secretary to work with states to develop a process to approve SWAPs within 180 days, giving congressional backing to existing efforts. The ANS will require a report to Congress on how many SWAPs have not been approved within 180 days and the reasons why.

Hearing information, including testimony, may be viewed [here](#), and the hearing memo may be viewed [here](#).

Staff contact: Doug Levine (Doug.Levine@mail.house.gov).

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>.

H.R. 1809 (Rep. Quigley), “*Great Lakes Fishery Research Reauthorization Act*”

H.R. 1809 reauthorizes the Great Lakes Fishery Research Program (Program). Established in 2019, the Program allows the U.S. Geological Survey to conduct “monitoring, assessment, science, and research, in support of the binational fisheries within the Great Lakes Basin.”¹¹ In creating the Program, Congress found that fisheries management and research requires sound science and new technologies to support the diverse ecosystem and economic engine of the Great Lakes.¹² To inform fisheries managers, the Program conducts research and investigations on various topics, including fish movement and behavior, deepwater ecosystem science, fish habitat, invasive species science, and leveraging existing and new technology, vessels, and scientific tools.¹³

P.L. 116-94 authorized the Program through fiscal year (FY) 2025 at \$15 million per year. H.R. 1809 would extend the authorization for another five years, until FY 2030, at existing funding levels. Hearing information, including testimony, may be viewed [here](#), and the hearing memo may be viewed [here](#).

Staff contact: Kirby Struhar (Kirby.Struhar@mail.house.gov) and Thomas Shipman (Thomas.Shipman@mail.house.gov).

H.R. 2293 (Rep. Ezell), “*Cormorant Relief Act of 2025*”

Largely concentrated in the Great Lakes region, double-crested cormorants (cormorants) are one of six cormorant species that are native to North America. Once in decline, cormorants have made a steady comeback, with the FWS estimating that the cormorant population in the continental U.S. and Canada is between 871,001 and 1,031,757 birds.¹⁴ With a diet consisting primarily of fish, cormorants often prey on commercial aquaculture facilities and fish farms, causing estimated losses of \$64.7 million per year.¹⁵

H.R. 2293 directs the Secretary of the Interior to reissue the 2016 depredation order under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), restoring protections for aquaculture producers and expanding the protections to twelve additional states. This bill also extends the take authorities to licensed private lake and pond managers.

Hearing information, including testimony, may be viewed [here](#), and the hearing memo may be viewed [here](#).

An ANS will be offered to provide technical fixes to the bill language and ensure the FWS follows the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) procedures.

¹¹ 16 U.S.C. 941h(c)(1).

¹² 16 U.S.C. 941h(b).

¹³ 16 U.S.C. 941(h)(c)(3).

¹⁴ “Expanding Management of Conflicts Associated with Double-crested Cormorants.” Frequently Asked Questions. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. <https://www.fws.gov/node/417891>.

¹⁵ Engle CR, Christie TW, Dorr BS, et al. Principal economic effects of cormorant predation on catfish farms. J World Aquacult Soc. 2021;52:41–56. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jwas.12728>.

Staff contact: Doug Levine (Doug.Levine@mail.house.gov).

H.R. 2405 (Rep. Barr), “*The White Oak Resilience Act*”

Quercus alba (white oak) is a preeminent hardwood uniquely found across more than 104 million acres in the eastern United States with significant habitat, economic, and cultural value.¹⁶ White oak is considered a keystone species that plays a critical role in supporting healthy forest ecosystems.¹⁷ They are especially important for wildlife, as a source of both food and habitat. White oaks are also prized commercial trees, providing wood products for furniture, flooring, and other uses. Notably, white oaks are used to create barrels for wine and spirits, especially bourbon whiskey.

Concerningly, experts believe the white oak population will rapidly decline in the next 10 to 15 years without drastic intervention to encourage regeneration.¹⁸ Due to a lack of necessary forest management practices and shifts in forest environments, the species’ seedlings and saplings are not growing at a sustainable rate. In the face of this looming shortage, the White Oak Initiative (WOI) was formed in November of 2017 with a focus on achieving long-term sustainability for this preeminent American hardwood.¹⁹ In 2021, under the direction of the WOI steering committee, the American Forest Foundation and the University of Kentucky released a science-based report entitled “*Restoring Sustainability for White Oak and Upland Oak Communities: An Assessment and Conservation Plan*.”²⁰

H.R. 2405, the “White Oak Resilience Act,” sponsored by Congressman Barr (R-KY), builds on that report’s recommendations and the WOI’s early successes. This bipartisan bill would formalize the WOI, create pilot programs for white oak regeneration, and establish a White Oak and Upland Oak Habitat Regeneration Program to coordinate restoration activities. The legislation also enables USFS to enter into memorandums of understanding with Indian Tribes and land-grant institutions, including Historically Black Colleges and Universities, to conduct research on white oak. This legislation addresses the tree nursery shortage and encourages the use of existing authorities that foster collaboration. Finally, H.R. 2405 establishes a formal white oak forest initiative at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). These provisions are also included in H.R. 471, the “Fix Our Forests Act,” which passed the House on January 23, 2025.²¹

Hearing information, including testimony, may be viewed [here](#), and the hearing memo may be viewed [here](#).

Staff contact: Aniela Butler (Aniela@mail.house.gov) and Brandon Miller (Brandon.Miller@mail.house.gov).

¹⁶ White Oak Initiative, “Restoring Sustainability for White Oak and Upland Oak Communities: An Assessment and Conservation Plan”, <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5cd1e6d5f9df7d00015ca6a4/t/625eadbba49a066a88e68e9d/1650372118921/White-Oak-Initiative-Assessment-Conservation-Plan.pdf>.

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ White Oak Initiative, “Board of Directors.” <https://www.whiteoakinitiative.org/board>.

²⁰ *Id.*

²¹ H.R. 471, Fix Our Forests Act, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/471>.

H.R. 2462 (Rep. Rose), “*Black Vulture Relief Act of 2025*”

H.R. 2462 would allow livestock producers and their employees to take a black vulture without a permit if the vulture is causing, or if there is a reasonable belief that it will cause, death, injury, or destruction to livestock. The bill requires livestock producers to report to the FWS no later than January 31 of each year if they have taken a black vulture in the preceding year and disclose how many they have taken. To facilitate this process, the FWS must make available on its website, no later than 180 days after the enactment of the bill, a reporting form for livestock producers.

H.R. 2462 is identical to H.R. 1437 from the 118th Congress, which passed the House Committee on Natural Resources by a vote of 17-13. Hearing information on that bill, including testimony, may be viewed [here](#), and the hearing memo may be viewed [here](#).

Staff contact: Doug Levine (Doug.Levine@mail.house.gov).

H.R. 2860 (Rep. Larsen), “*Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative Reauthorization Act of 2025*”

H.R. 2860 reauthorizes the Northwest Straits Advisory Commission (Commission), which was established in 1998 as part of P.L. 105-384.²² The Commission was created to respond to public resistance to a national marine sanctuary that was proposed for the region. The Commission is focused on proactive engagement, as local communities work to protect their marine resources.²³ Notably, advocacy from local leaders caused the sanctuary proposal to be dropped.²⁴ P.L. 105-384 authorized the Secretary of Commerce to collect data on marine resources in the Northwest Straits, coordinate activities to protect and restore these resources, and carry out activities identified in the Northwest Straits Citizens’ Advisory Commission Report to the Secretary of Commerce in 1998.²⁵

An amendment will be offered that removes the authorization of appropriations and sunsets the authorization seven years after enactment into law. Hearing information, including testimony, may be viewed [here](#), and the hearing memo may be viewed [here](#).

Staff contact: Kirby Struhar (Kirby.Struhar@mail.house.gov).

²² P.L. 105-483. Title IV – Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative.

²³ Northwest Straits Commission. History. <https://www.nwstraits.org/about-us/history/>.

²⁴ *Id.*

²⁵ P.L. 105-483. Title IV – Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative.

H.R. 3187 (Rep. Hill), To require the Secretary of Agriculture to convey a parcel of property of the Forest Service to Perry County, Arkansas, and for other purposes.

This legislation removes a liability from the American taxpayer by disposing of a vacant federal building, consistent with President Trump’s Executive Order on “Restoring Common Sense to Federal Office Space Management.”²⁶ H.R. 3187 directs the Secretary of Agriculture to convey a vacant USFS building and the surrounding 0.81 acres of land to Perry County, Arkansas. Perry County intends to renovate and repurpose the site to support the University of Arkansas Extension Program, the Perry County Conservation District, and youth development programs such as 4-H.²⁷ Creating a permanent space for the University of Arkansas Extension Program and 4-H Youth Development Program would enhance their coordination and allow them to expand outreach to Perry County youth. This is a smart use of public resources that would serve a compelling public purpose, particularly in a rural county with limited financial resources. An ANS will be offered at markup addressing technical corrections in the bill.

Hearing information, including testimony, may be viewed [here](#), and the hearing memo may be viewed [here](#).

Staff contact: Aniela Butler (Aniela@mail.house.gov) and Brandon Miller (Brandon.Miller@mail.house.gov).

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

H.R. 3858 would reauthorize, through FY 2031, the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund (SFRBTF), which is currently set to expire at the end of FY 2026. The bill would make technical improvements to enhance the program’s efficiency, including by reducing the tax on aerated bait buckets from 10 to 3 percent. 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 equal roughly \$250,000 to \$275,000 annually.²⁹ The funding reapportionment would provide the commissions the ability to address issues like aquatic invasive species and revive important habitat work that benefits coastal fisheries.

Lastly, H.R. 3858 seeks to 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

²⁶ *Id.*

²⁷ Hill, French, “Rep. Hill Introduces Bill to Transfer U.S. Forest Service Building to Perry County,” U.S. House of Representatives, May 14, 2024, <https://hill.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=9456>.

²⁸ *Id.*

²⁹ *Id.*

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.

Hearing information, including testimony, may be viewed [here](#), and the hearing memo may be viewed [here](#).

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III. CBO SCORES

None available.

IV. EFFECT ON CURRENT LAW (RAMSEYER)

[H.R. 435](#)

[H.R. 1676](#)

[H.R. 1809](#)

[H.R. 2405](#)

[H.R. 2860](#)

[H.R. 3858](#)