



# The Great AMERICAN OUTDOORS

*Act 250*

## Section-by-Section

### **Section 1. Short Title.**

- Names the bill the “Great American Outdoors Act 250” (GAOA 250).

### **Section 2. National Parks and Public Lands Maintenance and Modernization.**

#### *America’s Legacy Restoration Fund*

- Establishes the “America’s Legacy Restoration Fund” (ALRF) to address priority deferred maintenance at sites administered by the National Park Service (NPS), U.S. Forest Service (USFS), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and Bureau of Land Management (BLM), as well as at Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools.
- Provides \$1.9 billion annually over five years (Fiscal Years 2026-2030), derived from onshore energy revenues (50 percent of miscellaneous energy receipts from oil, gas, coal, and renewable energy), philanthropic donations, and the user fees authorized under Section 3.
- Stipulates that any deposits into ALRF in excess of \$1.9 billion will be deposited into the General Fund of the Treasury for debt reduction; that the bill does not affect the disposition of energy revenues to any other authorized source; and that funds may be invested at the request of the Secretary of the Interior.

#### *Good Governance Limitations on Funding*

- Provides for the following allocation of funds across federal agencies:
  - NPS: 70 percent
  - USFS: 15 percent
  - USFWS: 5 percent
  - BLM: 5 percent
  - BIE Schools: 5 percent
- Requires federal land managers to allocate not less than a minimum amount of funds each year to non-transportation deferred maintenance projects.:
  - USFWS: 80 percent
  - NPS: 70 percent
  - BLM: 65 percent
  - USFS: 55 percent
- Allows transfers to the Federal Highway Administration for transportation projects.

- Allocates 80 percent of funds collected from foreign visitor fees towards priority deferred maintenance projects in the unit in which the revenues were collected.
- Includes the following prohibitions and limitations on funding:
  - No land acquisition or acquisition of any interests in land
  - No substitution of ALRF funds to replace discretionary funding for recurring maintenance
  - No bonuses for federal employees
  - No decommissioning roads
  - 3 percent cap on administrative expenses
  - 15 percent cap on contingency funds
  - 8 percent cap on project planning and compliance

*Improving Project Selection, Distribution, and Submission*

- Directs agencies to prioritize projects that:
  - Address mission-critical assets that promote public access, enhance the visitor experience, or improve outdoor recreation opportunities;
  - Address deferred maintenance on assets for which failure would result in an imminent threat to public health and safety or the closure of public access; or
  - Are necessary to prevent further deterioration of assets that would result in a substantially higher future repair or replacement cost.
- Requires greater transparency in project selection by requiring the Department of the Interior (DOI) and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to publish a clear set of project selection criteria on a publicly available website. This criterion must take into account the appropriate distribution of projects geographically, the distribution of funds between large and small units, and whether a unit or state has not previously received funding.
- Requires DOI and USDA to annually solicit project recommendations from governors.
- Stipulates that any transportation project must account for at least a 10 percent growth in visitation to ensure the longevity of infrastructure.
- Specifies that projects must incorporate measures to improve access for individuals with disabilities in accordance with applicable law. Agencies must also include at least two projects authorized under the EXPLORE Act that improve access for individuals with disabilities on their priority deferred maintenance project list.
- Modifies submission procedures for priority deferred maintenance project lists to allow for planning on two-year time frames (upcoming fiscal year and subsequent fiscal year).
- Incentivizes private donations by requiring agencies to allocate not less than five percent of an agency's overall funding to projects for which full funding can be achieved through a combination of federal and non-federal funding. Holds agencies and partners accountable by providing a mechanism to reallocate funding after five years if full funding is not achieved.
- Requires DOI to list any projects carried out by a Maintenance Action Team in the prior year.
- Provides for alternate allocation procedures that allow for Appropriations bills to allocate funding for projects.

### *Incentivizing Public-Private Partnerships*

- Allows DOI and USDA to accept cash or in-kind donations to advance the goals of GAOA 250.
- Enhances donation solicitation by requiring DOI and USDA to publish information on ways that the public can donate to support GAOA 250, including through public awareness campaigns, physical or digital donation locations at project sites, allowing the public to donate when purchasing recreation passes, and partnerships with the Congressionally chartered non-profit organizations supporting each agency.
- Allows federal land management agencies to enter into partnerships with non-profit organizations to carry out the planning, design, construction, maintenance, and execution of priority deferred maintenance projects. Agencies may transfer all or a portion of funds to non-profit partners, subject to federal reporting requirements to ensure the transparency and accountability of federal funds.
- Incentivizes the use of Good Neighbor Authority by allowing agencies to enter into partnerships to address cross-boundary deferred maintenance and improve access between developed recreation sites on federal and non-federal land, and amends the Centennial Challenge Fund to expand allowable matching requirements.

### *Outdoor Recreation and Sportsmen's Access Pilot Program*

- Establishes a pilot program for outdoor recreation projects that improve outdoor recreation infrastructure and sportsmen's and women's access projects that enhance recreational opportunities for sportsmen and women, including improving wildlife habitat for hunting and fishing.
- Requires not more than 15 percent of funding for:
  - NPS to be allocated to outdoor recreation projects;
  - USFS and BLM to be allocated to outdoor recreation or sportsmen's and women's access projects; and
  - USFWS to be allocated to sportsmen's and women's access projects.
- Stipulates that each agency must carry out two outdoor recreation or sportsmen's and women's access projects in each region of their respective agency annually.
- For sportsmen's and women's access projects, agencies are encouraged to use other authorities such as good neighbor agreements, stewardship contracts, self-determination contracts and self-governance compact agreements with Tribes, and agreements under the Tribal Forest Protection Act. Incentivizes use of these authorities by allowing any retained receipts to be held at the unit and used to reduce deferred maintenance.

### *Enhancing Transparency and Accountability*

- Requires DOI and USDA to establish clear, quantifiable, and standardized metrics for calculating deferred maintenance that adhere to established industry standards and rely on standardized condition assessment methodologies. These metrics must also delineate between cyclical and deferred maintenance and account for the timely addition or removal of an asset from the deferred maintenance backlog.
- Creates a public geospatial dashboard to allow for easier tracking of projects across the country, including information about whether projects are on-schedule, on-budget, and what federal permitting is required to complete the project.

- Directs DOI and USDA to track the status of not less than 250 projects across the country that improve outdoor recreation, enhance visitor experience, or support the implementation of the EXPLORE Act on the dashboard.
- Requires annual reporting from DOI and USDA on the following: cyclical maintenance needs, the current size of the deferred maintenance backlog, how much deferred maintenance was reduced in the prior year, how much deferred maintenance DOI and USDA plan to address in the upcoming year, and how the agencies plan to increase preventative annual and cyclical maintenance to properly maintain assets.
- Requires more regular accounting from the U.S. Government Accountability Office by requiring reports every two years.

#### *Streamlining Project Implementation*

- Codifies a new, consolidated categorical exclusion under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 for priority deferred maintenance projects using funding under GAOA 250.
- Requires contracts to be awarded within 180 days of approval of the final design for a priority deferred maintenance project.
- Increases the micro-purchase threshold to \$25,000 for goods, services, and construction related to priority deferred maintenance projects.
- Increases from six percent to eight percent the cap on architect and engineering fees.
- Allows DOI and USDA to use emergency acquisition flexibilities for priority deferred maintenance projects including increased micro-purchase thresholds, simplified acquisition thresholds, and other higher-level emergency flexibilities.

#### *Disposing of Assets on the Deferred Maintenance Backlog*

- Sets up a mechanism to dispose of constructed assets on the deferred maintenance backlog that no longer serve the public interest or advance the mission of the relevant federal land management agency.

### **Section 3. Codification of Foreign Visitor Fees.**

- Codifies a \$100 surcharge for non-residents, in addition to any standard fee, at national parks and public lands where entrance fees or standard amenity recreation fees are charged.
- Codifies a \$250 pass for non-residents that allows entrance to all national parks and public lands for one year.