

**AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
TO H.R. 2950
OFFERED BY MR. HUFFMAN OF CALIFORNIA**

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

1 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

2 This Act may be cited as the “Coastal Habitat Con-
3 servation Act of 2023”.

4 SEC. 2. PURPOSE.

5 The purpose of this Act is to legislatively authorize
6 the Coastal Program of the Service in effect as of the date
7 of the enactment of this Act to conduct collaborative land-
8 scape-level planning and on-the-ground coastal habitat as-
9 sessment, coastal habitat protection, coastal habitat res-
10 toration, and coastal habitat enhancement projects in pri-
11 ority coastal landscapes to conserve and recover Federal
12 trust species.

13 SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

14 In this Act:

15 (1) COASTAL ECOSYSTEM.—The term “coastal
16 ecosystem” means a biological community of orga-
17 nisms interacting with each other and their habitats
18 in a coastal landscape.

1 (2) COASTAL HABITAT ASSESSMENT.—The
2 term “coastal habitat assessment” means the proc-
3 ess of evaluating the physical, chemical, and biologi-
4 cal function of a coastal site to determine the value
5 of the site to fish and wildlife.

6 (3) COASTAL HABITAT ENHANCEMENT.—The
7 term “coastal habitat enhancement” means the ma-
8 nipulation of the physical, chemical, or biological
9 characteristics of a coastal ecosystem to increase or
10 decrease specific biological functions that make the
11 ecosystem valuable to fish and wildlife.

12 (4) COASTAL HABITAT PLANNING.—The term
13 “coastal habitat planning” means the process of de-
14 veloping a comprehensive plan that—

15 (A) characterizes a coastal ecosystem;

16 (B) sets protection, restoration, or en-
17 hancement goals and identifies the priorities of
18 those goals;

19 (C) describes conservation strategies and
20 methodologies;

21 (D) establishes a timetable for implementa-
22 tion of the plan; and

23 (E) identifies roles of participants and
24 stakeholders.

25 (5) COASTAL HABITAT PROTECTION.—

1 (A) IN GENERAL.—The term “coastal
2 habitat protection” means a long-term action to
3 safeguard habitat of value to fish and wildlife
4 in a coastal ecosystem.

5 (B) INCLUSION.—The term “coastal habi-
6 tat protection” includes activities to support es-
7 tablishment of a conservation easement or fee
8 title acquisition by Federal and non-Federal
9 partners.

10 (6) COASTAL HABITAT RESTORATION.—The
11 term “coastal habitat restoration” means the manip-
12 ulation of the physical, chemical, or biological char-
13 acteristics of a coastal ecosystem with the goal of re-
14 turning, to the maximum extent practicable, the full
15 natural biological functions to lost or degraded na-
16 tive habitat.

17 (7) COASTAL LANDSCAPE.—The term “coastal
18 landscape” means a portion of a coastal ecosystem
19 within or adjacent to a coastal State that contains
20 various habitat types, including—

21 (A) a fresh or saltwater wetland in a coast-
22 al watershed;

23 (B) a coastal river, stream, or waterway;

24 (C) a coastal bay or estuary;

1 (D) a seagrass bed, reef, or other near-
2 shore marine habitat;

3 (E) a beach or dune system;

4 (F) a mangrove forest; and

5 (G) an associated coastal upland.

6 (8) COASTAL STATE.—The term “coastal
7 State” means—

8 (A) a State in, or bordering on, the Atlan-
9 tic, Pacific, or Arctic Ocean, the Gulf of Mex-
10 ico, the Long Island Sound, or 1 or more of the
11 Great Lakes;

12 (B) the District of Columbia;

13 (C) the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico;

14 (D) Guam;

15 (E) American Samoa;

16 (F) the Commonwealth of the Northern
17 Mariana Islands;

18 (G) the Federated States of Micronesia;

19 (H) the Republic of the Marshall Islands;

20 (I) the Republic of Palau; and

21 (J) the United States Virgin Islands.

22 (9) FEDERAL TRUST SPECIES.—The term
23 “Federal trust species” means migratory birds,
24 threatened species or endangered species listed
25 under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16

1 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.), interjurisdictional fish, and
2 marine mammals for which the Secretary has man-
3 agement authority.

4 (10) FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.—The term “fi-
5 nancial assistance” means Federal funding provided
6 to Federal, State, local, or Tribal governments, non-
7 governmental institutions, nonprofit organizations,
8 and private individuals and entities through a grant
9 or cooperative agreement.

10 (11) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary”
11 means the Secretary of the Interior.

12 (12) SERVICE.—The term “Service” means the
13 United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

14 (13) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The term
15 “technical assistance” means a collaboration, facili-
16 tation, or consulting action relating to a coastal
17 habitat planning, coastal habitat assessment, coastal
18 habitat protection, coastal habitat restoration, or
19 coastal habitat enhancement project or initiative in
20 which the Service contributes scientific knowledge,
21 skills, and expertise to the project or initiative.

22 **SEC. 4. COASTAL PROGRAM.**

23 The Secretary shall carry out the Coastal Program
24 within the Service to—

1 (1) identify the leading threats to priority
2 coastal landscapes and conservation actions to ad-
3 dress those threats in partnership with Federal,
4 State, local, and Tribal governments, nongovern-
5 mental institutions, nonprofit organizations, and pri-
6 vate individuals and entities;

7 (2) provide technical assistance and financial
8 assistance through partnerships with Federal, State,
9 local, and Tribal governments, nongovernmental in-
10 stitutions, nonprofit organizations, and private indi-
11 viduals and entities to conduct voluntary coastal
12 habitat planning, coastal habitat assessment, coastal
13 habitat protection, coastal habitat restoration, and
14 coastal habitat enhancement projects on public land
15 or private land;

16 (3) ensure the health and resilience of coastal
17 ecosystems through adaptive management proce-
18 dures based on the best available science;

19 (4) build the capacity of Federal, State, local,
20 and Tribal governments, nongovernmental institu-
21 tions, nonprofit organizations, and private individ-
22 uals and entities to carry out environmental con-
23 servation and stewardship measures;

24 (5) assist in the development and implementa-
25 tion of monitoring protocols to ensure the success of

1 coastal ecosystem restoration and coastal ecosystem
2 enhancement measures; and

3 (6) collaborate and share information with part-
4 ners and the public relating to best management
5 practices for the conservation, restoration, and en-
6 hancement of coastal ecosystems.

7 **SEC. 5. REPORTS.**

8 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the
9 date of the enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter,
10 the Secretary, acting through the Director of the Service,
11 shall submit to the Committees on Appropriations and
12 Natural Resources of the House of Representatives and
13 the Committees on Appropriations and Environment and
14 Public Works of the Senate, and make available to the
15 public on the website of the Service, a report on the Coast-
16 al Program carried out under this Act.

17 (b) REQUIREMENTS.—Each report submitted under
18 subsection (a) shall assess on regional and nationwide
19 bases—

20 (1) Coastal Program work on coastal eco-
21 systems;

22 (2) progress made by the Coastal Program to-
23 ward identifying the leading threats to priority
24 coastal landscapes and conservation actions to ad-
25 dress those threats; and

1 (3) prospects for, and success of, protecting, re-
2 storing, and enhancing coastal ecosystems.

3 (c) INCLUSIONS.—Each report submitted under sub-
4 section (a) shall include—

5 (1) quantitative information on coastal land-
6 scapes protected, restored, or enhanced;

7 (2) funds appropriated to the Coastal Program
8 that have been expended or leveraged;

9 (3) a description of adaptive management prac-
10 tices implemented; and

11 (4) a description of emerging challenges or data
12 gaps that hinder the ability of the Coastal Program
13 to achieve the purpose of this Act.

14 **SEC. 6. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

15 There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out
16 this Act \$16,957,000 for each of fiscal years 2024 through
17 2028.

