

114TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

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

To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to carry out programs and activities that connect people in the United States, especially children, youth, and families, with the outdoors.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. HEINRICH introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_

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**A BILL**

To authorize the Secretary of the Interior to carry out programs and activities that connect people in the United States, especially children, youth, and families, with the outdoors.

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 “Healthy Kids Outdoors  
5 Act of 2015”.

6       **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7       Congress finds that—

1           (1) children today are spending less time out-  
2 doors than any generation in human history, as evi-  
3 denced by studies that show children enjoy half as  
4 much time outdoors today as children did just 20  
5 years ago, while children spend more than 7½ hours  
6 every day in front of electronic media;

7           (2) the health of children in the United States  
8 is at risk as evidenced by the growing obesity crisis  
9 in which, during the past 30 years, the childhood  
10 obesity rate has more than doubled and the adoles-  
11 cent obesity rate has quadrupled, costing the econ-  
12 omy of the United States billions of dollars each  
13 year;

14           (3) the rise in childhood obesity has had a neg-  
15 ative economic impact;

16           (4) the readiness of the military is declining as  
17 nearly 1 in 4 applicants to the military is rejected  
18 for being overweight or obese, which is the most  
19 common reason for medical disqualification;

20           (5) research has shown that military children  
21 and families are facing increased stress and mental  
22 strain and challenges due to multiple, extended de-  
23 ployments;

24           (6) military family service organizations have  
25 developed programs that connect military children

1 and families with positive, meaningful outdoor expe-  
2 riences that benefit mental and physical health, but  
3 the programs lack sufficient resources to meet in-  
4 creasing demand;

5 (7) the outdoor retail industry, many local tour-  
6 ist destinations or “gateway communities”, and  
7 State fish and wildlife agencies rely on revenue gen-  
8 erated from individuals spending time outdoors to  
9 create jobs in local communities;

10 (8) over the past several years, urbanization,  
11 changing land use patterns, increasing road traffic,  
12 and inadequate solutions to addressing those chal-  
13 lenges in the built environment have combined to  
14 make it more difficult for many people in the United  
15 States to walk or bike to schools, parks, and play  
16 areas or experience the natural environment;

17 (9) spending time in green spaces outside the  
18 home, including public land, parks, play areas, and  
19 gardens—

20 (A) increases concentration, inhibition of  
21 initial impulses, and self-discipline in children;  
22 and

23 (B) has been shown to reduce stress and  
24 mental fatigue in children;

1           (10) in 1 study, children who were exposed to  
2 greener environments in a public housing area dem-  
3 onstrated less aggression, violence, and stress;

4           (11) visitation to public land in the United  
5 States has declined or remained flat in recent years,  
6 and yet, connecting with nature and the great out-  
7 doors in communities is critical to fostering the next  
8 generation of outdoor enthusiasts who will visit, ap-  
9 preciate, and become stewards of the public land in  
10 the United States;

11           (12) spending time outdoors in nature—

12               (A) is beneficial to the physical, mental,  
13 and emotional health of children; and

14               (B) has been proven—

15                   (i) to decrease symptoms of attention  
16 deficit and hyperactivity disorder in chil-  
17 dren;

18                   (ii) to stimulate brain development,  
19 improve motor skills, result in better sleep,  
20 reduce stress, increase creativity, and im-  
21 prove moods in children; and

22                   (iii) to reduce the risk of developing  
23 myopia in children;

24           (13) children who spend time playing outside  
25 are more likely to take risks, seek out adventure, de-

1       velop self-confidence, and respect the value of na-  
2       ture;

3           (14) a direct childhood experience with nature  
4       before the age of 11 promotes a long-term connec-  
5       tion to nature;

6           (15) conservation education and outdoor recre-  
7       ation experiences such as camping, hiking, boating,  
8       hunting, fishing, archery, recreational shooting, wild-  
9       life watching, and other experiences are critical to  
10      engaging young people in the outdoors;

11          (16) as children become more disconnected  
12      from the natural world, the hunting and angling  
13      conservation legacy of the United States is at risk;

14          (17) hunters and anglers play a critical role in  
15      reconnecting young people with nature, protecting  
16      the natural resources of the United States, and fos-  
17      tering a lifelong understanding of the value of con-  
18      serving the natural world;

19          (18) research demonstrates that hunters that  
20      become engaged in hunting as children are among  
21      the most active and interested hunters as adults;

22          (19) the vast majority of hunters report that  
23      the hunters were introduced to hunting between the  
24      ages of 10 and 12, with the overwhelming majority  
25      of children being introduced to hunting by an adult;

1           (20) parks and recreation, youth-serving, serv-  
2           ice-learning, conservation, health, education, and  
3           built-environment organizations, facilities, and per-  
4           sonnel provide critical resources and infrastructure  
5           for connecting children and families with nature;

6           (21) it takes many dedicated people to work to  
7           preserve, protect, enhance, and restore natural re-  
8           sources in the United States;

9           (22) with an aging workforce in the natural re-  
10          source professions, it is critical for the next genera-  
11          tion to have an appreciation for nature and be ready  
12          to take over the responsibilities relating to the nat-  
13          ural resources of the United States;

14          (23) place-based service-learning opportunities  
15          use land and water as the context for learning by  
16          engaging students in the process of exploration, ac-  
17          tion, and reflection;

18          (24) physical activity outdoors connected with  
19          meaningful community service to solve real-world  
20          problems, such as removing invasive plants or re-  
21          moving trash from a streambed, strengthens commu-  
22          nities by engaging youth as citizen stewards;

23          (25) States and community-based partners have  
24          some notable programs that connect children and  
25          families with nature, yet most States lack sufficient

1 resources and a comprehensive strategy to effectively  
2 engage State agencies across multiple fields; and

3 (26) States need to engage in cross-sector agen-  
4 cy and nonprofit collaboration that involves public  
5 health and wellness, parks and recreation, transpor-  
6 tation and city planning, and other sectors focused  
7 on connecting children and families with the out-  
8 doors to increase coordination and effective imple-  
9 mentation of the policy tools and programs that a  
10 State can bring to bear to provide outdoor opportu-  
11 nities for children and families.

12 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

13 In this Act:

14 (1) **ELIGIBLE ENTITY.**—The term “eligible enti-  
15 ty” means—

16 (A) a State; or

17 (B) a consortium from 1 State that in-  
18 cludes the State and local partners.

19 (2) **LOCAL PARTNER.**—The term “local part-  
20 ner” means—

21 (A) a unit of local government;

22 (B) a tribal government;

23 (C) a parks and recreation department or  
24 district;

25 (D) a school district;

1 (E) an institution of higher education;

2 (F) a nonprofit organization; and

3 (G) a consortium of entities described in  
4 subparagraphs (A) through (F).

5 (3) NATIONAL STRATEGY.—The term “national  
6 strategy” means the national strategy developed  
7 under section 5(a).

8 (4) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means  
9 the Secretary of the Interior.

10 (5) STATE.—The term “State” means any of  
11 the several States, the District of Columbia, the  
12 Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the United States  
13 Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Com-  
14 monwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, any  
15 other territory or possession of the United States, or  
16 any Indian tribe.

17 (6) STATE STRATEGY.—The term “State strat-  
18 egy” means a State strategy developed under section  
19 4(a).

20 **SEC. 4. COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS FOR DEVELOPMENT**  
21 **OR IMPLEMENTATION OF HEALTHY KIDS**  
22 **OUTDOORS STATE STRATEGIES.**

23 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may issue to an eli-  
24 gible entity a cooperative agreement for each State for the  
25 development, implementation, and updating by the eligible

1 entity of a 5-year State strategy, to be known as a  
2 “Healthy Kids Outdoors State Strategy”, that is designed  
3 to encourage people in the United States (especially chil-  
4 dren, youth, and families) to be physically active outdoors.

5 (b) SUBMISSION AND APPROVAL OF STRATEGIES.—

6 (1) APPLICATIONS.—An application for a coop-  
7 erative agreement under subsection (a) shall—

8 (A) be submitted by the eligible entity to  
9 the Secretary not later than 120 days after the  
10 date on which the Secretary publishes guide-  
11 lines under subsection (f)(1); and

12 (B) include—

13 (i) a State strategy that meets the re-  
14 quirements of subsection (c), as deter-  
15 mined by the Secretary; or

16 (ii) a proposal for the development  
17 and submission to the Secretary of a State  
18 strategy.

19 (2) APPROVAL OF STRATEGY; PEER REVIEW.—

20 Not later than 90 days after the date on which a  
21 State strategy is submitted under paragraph  
22 (1)(B)(i), the Secretary shall, through a peer review  
23 process, approve, or recommend changes to, the  
24 State strategy.

25 (3) STATE STRATEGY UPDATES.—

1 (A) IN GENERAL.—An eligible entity that  
2 receives funds under this section shall update  
3 the State strategy at least once every 5 years.

4 (B) FUNDING.—Funding to an eligible en-  
5 tity under this section shall be terminated if the  
6 eligible entity does not—

7 (i) update the State strategy in ac-  
8 cordance with subparagraph (A); or

9 (ii) provide to the Secretary reports  
10 that document—

11 (I) the results of evaluation  
12 methods consistent with the guidelines  
13 published under subsection (f)(1); and

14 (II) lessons learned from imple-  
15 menting the State strategy.

16 (c) COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY REQUIREMENTS.—  
17 Each State strategy shall include—

18 (1) a description of ways in which the eligible  
19 entity will encourage people in the United States  
20 (especially children, youth, and families) to be phys-  
21 ically active in the outdoors through—

22 (A) State, local, and tribal—

23 (i) public health systems;

24 (ii) public parks and recreation sys-  
25 tems; and

1 (iii) public transportation and city  
2 planning systems; and

3 (B) other public systems that connect peo-  
4 ple in the United States (especially children,  
5 youth, and families) to the outdoors;

6 (2) a description of ways in which the eligible  
7 entity will partner with nongovernmental organiza-  
8 tions (including organizations serving military fami-  
9 lies and tribal agencies), with an emphasis on orga-  
10 nizations serving children, youth, and families;

11 (3) a description of ways in which State agen-  
12 cies will collaborate with each other to implement  
13 the State strategy;

14 (4) a description of ways in which funding will  
15 be expended through local planning and implementa-  
16 tion subgrants under subsection (d);

17 (5) a description of ways in which the eligible  
18 entity will evaluate the effectiveness of, and measure  
19 the impact of, the State strategy, including an esti-  
20 mate of the costs associated with the evaluation;

21 (6) a description of ways in which the eligible  
22 entity will provide opportunities for public involve-  
23 ment in developing and implementing the State  
24 strategy;

1           (7) a description of ways in which the State  
2 strategy will increase visitation to Federal public  
3 land within the State; and

4           (8) a description of ways in which the eligible  
5 entity will leverage private funds to expand opportu-  
6 nities and further implement the State strategy.

7 (d) LOCAL PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION.—

8           (1) IN GENERAL.—A State strategy shall pro-  
9 vide for the provision of subgrants from the eligible  
10 entity to local partners to implement the State strat-  
11 egy through 1 or more of the program activities de-  
12 scribed in paragraph (2).

13           (2) PROGRAM ACTIVITIES.—Program activities  
14 referred to in paragraph (1) may include—

15           (A) implementing outdoor recreation and  
16 youth mentoring programs that provide oppor-  
17 tunities to experience the outdoors, be phys-  
18 ically active, and teach skills for lifelong partici-  
19 pation in outdoor activities, including fishing,  
20 hunting, recreational shooting, archery, hiking,  
21 camping, outdoor play in natural environments,  
22 and wildlife watching;

23           (B) implementing programs that connect  
24 communities with safe parks, green spaces, and  
25 outdoor recreation areas through affordable

1 public transportation and trail systems that en-  
2 courage walking, biking, and increased physical  
3 activity outdoors;

4 (C) implementing—

5 (i) school-based programs that use  
6 outdoor learning environments, such as  
7 wildlife habitats or gardens; and

8 (ii) programs that use service learning  
9 to restore natural areas and maintain rec-  
10 reational assets; and

11 (D) implementing education programs for  
12 parents and caregivers about the health benefits  
13 of active time outdoors to fight obesity and in-  
14 crease the quality of life for people in the  
15 United States (especially children, youth, and  
16 families).

17 (e) PRIORITY.—In making cooperative agreements  
18 under subsection (a) and subgrants under subsection  
19 (d)(1), the Secretary and the eligible entity, respectively,  
20 shall give preference to eligible entities and local partners  
21 that serve individuals that have limited opportunities to  
22 experience nature, including individuals that—

23 (1) are socioeconomically disadvantaged;

24 (2) have a disability; or

1           (3) suffer disproportionately from physical and  
2           mental health stressors.

3           (f) GUIDELINES.—Not later than 180 days after the  
4           date of enactment of this Act, and after notice and oppor-  
5           tunity for public comment, the Secretary shall publish in  
6           the Federal Register guidelines on the implementation of  
7           this Act, including guidelines for—

8           (1) developing and submitting strategies and  
9           evaluation methods under subsection (b); and

10          (2) technical assistance and dissemination of  
11          best practices under section 7.

12          (g) REPORTS.—Not later than 2 years after the date  
13          on which the Secretary approves the State strategy of an  
14          eligible entity receiving funds under this section, and every  
15          year thereafter, the eligible entity shall submit to the Sec-  
16          retary a report on the implementation of the State strat-  
17          egy based on the evaluation and assessment of the eligible  
18          entity in meeting the goals specified in the State strategy.

19          (h) ALLOCATION OF FUNDS.—An eligible entity re-  
20          ceiving amounts from a cooperative agreement issued  
21          under subsection (a) for a fiscal year—

22          (1) may use not more than 5 percent of the  
23          funding for administrative expenses; and

1           (2) shall use at least 95 percent of the funding  
2           to provide subgrants to local partners under sub-  
3           section (d).

4           (i) **MATCHING REQUIREMENT.**—An eligible entity re-  
5           ceiving amounts from a cooperative agreement issued  
6           under subsection (a) for a fiscal year shall provide a 25-  
7           percent match through in-kind contributions or cash.

8           **SEC. 5. NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR ENCOURAGING PEOPLE**  
9                               **IN THE UNITED STATES TO BE ACTIVE OUT-**  
10                              **DOORS.**

11          (a) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than September 30,  
12          2016, the President, in cooperation with the heads of ap-  
13          propriate Federal departments and agencies, shall develop  
14          and issue a national strategy for encouraging people in  
15          the United States (especially children, youth, and families)  
16          to be physically active outdoors.

17          (b) **REQUIREMENTS.**—The strategy developed under  
18          subsection (a) shall include—

19               (1) the identification of—

20                       (A) barriers to people in the United States  
21                       (especially children, youth, and families) spend-  
22                       ing time outdoors; and

23                       (B) specific policy solutions to address the  
24                       barriers identified under subparagraph (A);

1           (2) the identification of opportunities for part-  
2           nerships with Federal, State, tribal, and local part-  
3           ners;

4           (3) the coordination of efforts among the heads  
5           of appropriate Federal departments and agencies to  
6           address the impacts of people in the United States  
7           (especially children, youth, and families) spending  
8           less active time outdoors on—

9                   (A) public health, including childhood obe-  
10                   sity, attention deficit disorders and stress;

11                   (B) the future of conservation in the  
12                   United States; and

13                   (C) the economy of the United States;

14           (4) the identification of ongoing research needs  
15           to document the health, conservation, economic, and  
16           other outcomes of implementing the national strat-  
17           egy and State strategies;

18           (5) the coordination and alignment of the na-  
19           tional strategy with State strategies; and

20           (6) an action plan for implementing the na-  
21           tional strategy at the Federal level.

22           (c) STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT.—

23                   (1) PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.—Throughout the  
24                   process of developing the national strategy under  
25                   this section, the President—

1 (A) may use, incorporate, or otherwise con-  
2 sider existing Federal plans and strategies that,  
3 in whole or in part, contribute to connecting  
4 people in the United States, especially children,  
5 youth, and families, with the outdoors; and

6 (B) shall provide for public participation,  
7 including a national summit of participants  
8 with demonstrated expertise in encouraging in-  
9 dividuals to be physically active outdoors in na-  
10 ture.

11 (2) UPDATING THE NATIONAL STRATEGY.—

12 (A) IN GENERAL.—The President shall up-  
13 date the national strategy not later than 5  
14 years after the date on which the first national  
15 strategy is issued under subsection (a), and  
16 every 5 years thereafter.

17 (B) REQUIREMENTS.—In updating the na-  
18 tional strategy under subparagraph (A), the  
19 President shall incorporate results of the eval-  
20 uation under section 6.

21 **SEC. 6. NATIONAL EVALUATION OF HEALTH IMPACTS.**

22 The Secretary, in coordination with the Secretary of  
23 Health and Human Services, shall—

24 (1) develop recommendations for appropriate  
25 evaluation measures and criteria for a study of na-

1 tional significance on the health impacts of the na-  
2 tional strategy and State strategies under this Act;  
3 and

4 (2) carry out the study under paragraph (1).

5 **SEC. 7. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND BEST PRACTICES.**

6 The Secretary shall—

7 (1) provide technical assistance to eligible enti-  
8 ties and local partners under section 4 through coop-  
9 erative agreements with national organizations with  
10 a proven track record of encouraging people in the  
11 United States (especially children, youth, and fami-  
12 lies) to be physically active outdoors; and

13 (2) disseminate best practices that emerge from  
14 strategies funded under this Act.

15 **SEC. 8. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

16 (a) **IN GENERAL.**—There are authorized to be appro-  
17 priated to the Secretary to carry out this Act—

18 (1) \$1,000,000 for fiscal year 2016;

19 (2) \$2,000,000 for fiscal year 2017; and

20 (3) \$3,000,000 for fiscal year 2018.

21 (b) **LIMITATION.**—Of the amounts made available to  
22 carry out this Act for a fiscal year, not more than 5 per-  
23 cent may be made available for carrying out section 7.

24 (c) **OTHER FUNDS.**—Funds made available under  
25 this Act shall be used to supplement, and not supplant,

1 any other Federal, State, or local funds available for ac-  
2 tivities that encourage people in the United States (espe-  
3 cially children, youth, and families) to be physically active  
4 outdoors.