

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. _____

To direct the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a Civilian Climate Corps, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. COONS (for himself, Mr. HEINRICH, and Mr. LUJÁN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to establish a Civilian Climate Corps, and for other purposes.

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 “Civilian Climate Corps
5 Act of 2021”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds that—

1 (1) the United States has a strong history of
2 citizen response to national calls to service in order
3 to help the United States recover during a crisis;

4 (2) more than 80 years ago, the United States
5 rose to the challenge of the Great Depression with
6 the creation of citizen service programs, such as the
7 Civilian Conservation Corps and the Works Progress
8 Administration;

9 (3) millions of participants in the Civilian Con-
10 servation Corps and the Works Progress Administra-
11 tion program benefitted from paid employment and
12 opportunities to develop the skills of the participants
13 while constructing units of the National Park Sys-
14 tem and public land infrastructure and producing
15 cultural works still enjoyed today;

16 (4) the signature programs of the Corporation
17 for National and Community Service, which are the
18 AmeriCorps State and National, AmeriCorps Na-
19 tional Civilian Community Corps, AmeriCorps
20 VISTA, and National Senior Service Corps pro-
21 grams, can and should be expanded to meet current
22 needs;

23 (5) individuals in every State and territory have
24 been infected with the COVID-19 virus and killed

1 by COVID–19, with more than 29,000,000 cases
2 causing more than 500,000 deaths;

3 (6) in response to the COVID–19 pandemic,
4 States, Tribal governments, and cities across the
5 United States have closed down businesses, schools,
6 and public events, leading to a dramatic drop in eco-
7 nomic activity and a sharp projected decline in the
8 United States economy;

9 (7) more than 18,000,000 people in the United
10 States are receiving unemployment benefits, with
11 weekly unemployment filings continuing to increase;

12 (8) young workers, women, workers with low
13 educational attainment, part-time workers, and ra-
14 cial and ethnic minorities have experienced high un-
15 employment rates throughout the COVID–19 pan-
16 demic;

17 (9) the United States and the world are facing
18 a profound climate crisis and the impacts of climate
19 change will continue to intensify according to cur-
20 rent trajectories;

21 (10) the scientific community has made it clear
22 that significant and rapid action is necessary to
23 avoid the most catastrophic impacts of climate
24 change;

1 (11) on January 27, 2021, President Biden
2 issued Executive Order 14008 (86 Fed. Reg. 7619
3 (February 1, 2021)), which calls for the creation of
4 a Civilian Climate Corps Initiative in which partici-
5 pants would work—

6 (A) to conserve and restore public land and
7 water;

8 (B) to increase reforestation;

9 (C) to increase carbon sequestration in the
10 agricultural sector;

11 (D) to protect biodiversity;

12 (E) to improve access to recreation;

13 (F) to bolster community resilience; and

14 (G) to address climate change;

15 (12) the Civilian Climate Corps presents a
16 unique opportunity for flexible, locally driven re-
17 sponses to meet State and local employment, envi-
18 ronmental, and recovery needs; and

19 (13) the Civilian Climate Corps would create
20 conservation and resilience jobs that emphasize ac-
21 cessible training opportunities to help a generation
22 of workers develop robust professional skills.

23 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

24 In this Act:

1 (1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMIT-
2 TEES.—The term “appropriate congressional com-
3 mittees” means—

4 (A) the Committees on Appropriations,
5 Energy and Natural Resources, Agriculture,
6 Nutrition, and Forestry, and Health, Edu-
7 cation, Labor, and Pensions of the Senate; and

8 (B) the Committees on Appropriations,
9 Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Education
10 and Labor of the House of Representatives.

11 (2) CORPS.—The term “Corps” means the Ci-
12 vilian Climate Corps established under section 4(a).

13 (3) DISPROPORTIONATELY IMPACTED COMMU-
14 NITY.—The term “disproportionately impacted com-
15 munity” means a community with significant rep-
16 resentation of communities of color, low-income com-
17 munities, or Tribal and Native American commu-
18 nities, that experiences, or is at risk of experiencing
19 higher or more adverse human health or environ-
20 mental effects.

21 (4) QUALIFIED YOUTH SERVICE OR CONSERVA-
22 TION CORPS.—The term “qualified youth service or
23 conservation corps” means—

24 (A) a program authorized under—

1 (i) the National and Community Serv-
2 ice Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12501 et seq.);

3 (ii) title I of Public Law 91–378
4 (commonly known as the “Youth Conserva-
5 tion Corps Act of 1970”) (16 U.S.C. 1701
6 et seq.); or

7 (iii) the Public Lands Corps Act of
8 1993 (16 U.S.C. 1721 et seq.), including
9 the Indian Youth Service Corps authorized
10 under section 210 of that Act (16 U.S.C.
11 1727b); and

12 (B) the Urban Youth Corps authorized
13 under section 106 of the National and Commu-
14 nity Service Trust Act of 1993 (42 U.S.C.
15 12656).

16 (5) SECRETARIES.—The term “Secretaries”
17 means the Secretary of the Interior and the Sec-
18 retary of Agriculture, acting jointly.

19 (6) TRIBAL AND NATIVE AMERICAN COMMU-
20 NITY.—The term “Tribal and Native American com-
21 munity” means a population of people who are mem-
22 bers of—

23 (A) an Indian Tribe (as defined in section
24 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Edu-
25 cation Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304));

1 (B) an urban Indian (as defined in section
2 4 of the Indian Health Care Improvement Act
3 (25 U.S.C. 1603)) community;

4 (C) a Native Hawaiian (as defined in sec-
5 tion 815 of the Native American Programs Act
6 of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 2992c)) community; or

7 (D) a Native American Pacific Islander (as
8 defined in section 815 of the Native American
9 Programs Act of 1974 (42 U.S.C. 2992c)) com-
10 munity.

11 **SEC. 4. CIVILIAN CLIMATE CORPS.**

12 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretaries, in coordina-
13 tion with the Secretary of Transportation, the Secretary
14 of Housing and Urban Development, the Secretary of En-
15 ergy, the Secretary of Commerce, the Secretary of Labor,
16 the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Chief
17 Executive Officer of the Corporation for National and
18 Community Service, the Director of the Office of Manage-
19 ment and Budget, the Administrator of the Environmental
20 Protection Agency, and the heads of other relevant Fed-
21 eral agencies, shall enter into an interagency agreement
22 establishing a Civilian Climate Corps, to be operated in
23 accordance with the National and Community Service Act
24 of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12501 et seq.) and the Domestic Vol-
25 unteer Service Act of 1973 (42 U.S.C. 4950 et seq.).

1 (b) CONSULTATION.—The Secretaries shall consult
2 with the National Association of Service and Conservation
3 Corps and other relevant national service organizations for
4 the purpose of identifying appropriate projects, activities,
5 and workforce development outcomes for the Corps.

6 (c) REPORT.—Not later than 60 days after the date
7 of enactment of this Act, the Secretaries, in coordination
8 with the Secretary of Transportation, the Secretary of
9 Housing and Urban Development, the Secretary of En-
10 ergy, the Secretary of Commerce, the Secretary of Labor,
11 the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Chief
12 Executive Officer of the Corporation for National and
13 Community Service, the Director of the Office of Manage-
14 ment and Budget, the Administrator of the Environmental
15 Protection Agency, and the heads of other relevant Fed-
16 eral agencies, shall submit to the appropriate congres-
17 sional committees a report that the describes—

18 (1) the proposed number of Corps members;

19 and

20 (2) the recommended amount of funding for the
21 Corps for each of fiscal years 2022 through 2025.

22 (d) DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS OF PARTICIPANTS.—In
23 selecting members for the Corps, the Secretaries shall en-
24 sure that—

1 (1) members are from economically, geographi-
2 cally, and ethnically diverse backgrounds; and

3 (2) veterans, individuals with disabilities, and
4 people of various sexes, sexual orientations, and gen-
5 der identities are represented.

6 **SEC. 5. REQUIREMENTS FOR CORPS SERVICE PROJECTS.**

7 A service project carried out by the Corps shall—

8 (1)(A) prioritize efforts to assist disproportion-
9 ately impacted communities; or

10 (B) be carried out in partnership with a quali-
11 fied youth service or conservation corps;

12 (2) be coordinated with Tribal and Native
13 American communities to protect natural cultural
14 resources; and

15 (3) accomplish 1 or more of the following objec-
16 tives:

17 (A) Conserving, monitoring, and restoring
18 public land and water to help mitigate and
19 adapt to climate change.

20 (B) Addressing the needs of frontline com-
21 munities experiencing the worst effects of cli-
22 mate change.

23 (C) Building resilience to climate change
24 through nature-based solutions, such as living
25 shorelines, wetlands, green stormwater infra-

1 structure, and sustainable forest management,
2 to appropriately manage natural systems that
3 buffer human communities from environmental
4 harm.

5 (D) Assisting natural disaster-prone com-
6 munities and disproportionately impacted com-
7 munities by replacing aging infrastructure with
8 climate-ready upgrades, such as improved
9 stream crossings and enhanced energy effi-
10 ciency for community facilities and housing.

11 (E) Promoting traditional ecological knowl-
12 edge natural climate solutions, such as eco-
13 logically appropriate reforestation and seques-
14 tration and techniques, such as aquaponics and
15 regenerative practices, in the agricultural sec-
16 tor, to help mitigate climate change by reducing
17 atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations.

18 (F) Supporting the resilience of natural
19 systems to climate change by protecting bio-
20 diversity through targeted conservation efforts
21 and eradication of invasive species.

22 (G) Increasing education of the general
23 public on climate adaptation and mitigation, in-
24 cluding ways in which private landowners can
25 initiate similar efforts on private land.

1 (H) Improving access to outdoor recreation
2 to promote a continued national appreciation
3 for the natural environment.

4 (I) Addressing environmental degradation
5 in disproportionately impacted communities.

6 (J) Supporting the resilience of agricul-
7 tural and food supply systems to ensure reliable
8 and equitable access to nutritious foods, par-
9 ticularly among disproportionately impacted
10 communities.

11 (K) Advancing the resiliency and carbon
12 emission reductions of participating agencies
13 through installation of small-scale clean energy
14 equipment or facility weatherization projects on
15 public land.

16 (L) Addressing urban and suburban green-
17 ing and revitalization, including—

18 (i) the preservation, restoration, and
19 expansion of open spaces;

20 (ii) the conversion of blacktops;

21 (iii) the installations of green roofs;

22 and

23 (iv) the planting of trees.

1 **SEC. 6. MATCHING FUNDS WAIVER.**

2 Any otherwise applicable matching funds require-
3 ments, including under section 212(a)(1) of the Public
4 Lands Corps Act of 1993 (16 U.S.C. 1729(a)(1)), shall
5 be waived for projects carried out using amounts made
6 available under this Act.

7 **SEC. 7. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

8 (a) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be appro-
9 priated such sums as are necessary to carry out this Act
10 for each of fiscal years 2022 through 2025.

11 (b) RESERVATION OF FUNDS FOR INDIAN TRIBAL
12 AND NATIVE AMERICAN COMMUNITIES.—

13 (1) IN GENERAL.—Of the amounts appro-
14 priated to carry out this Act for any fiscal year, the
15 Secretaries shall reserve not less than 5 percent for
16 projects carried out in Tribal and Native American
17 communities.

18 (2) CONSULTATION REQUIRED.—The Secre-
19 taries shall consult with each applicable Tribal and
20 Native American community with respect to any
21 projects carried out with funds reserved for use in
22 Tribal and Native American communities under this
23 subsection.