

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. RES. _____

Expressing support for the designation of the week of September 21 through September 28, 2024, as “National Estuaries Week”.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. WHITEHOUSE submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on _____

RESOLUTION

Expressing support for the designation of the week of September 21 through September 28, 2024, as “National Estuaries Week”.

Whereas estuary regions cover only 13 percent of the land area in the continental United States but contain nearly 40 percent of the population, 39 percent of the jobs, and 47 percent of the economic output of the United States;

Whereas the oceans, estuaries, and Great Lakes of the United States continue to fuel economic growth across the United States, with employment from the estuarine and ocean economy growing at 5 percent in 2022, compared to the national average employment growth of 3.9 percent;

Whereas the estuary, ocean, and Great Lakes economic sectors created 88,000 new jobs between 2018 and 2019,

employed 3,500,000 people, and contributed \$476,200,000,000 to the gross domestic product;

Whereas the commercial and recreational fishing industries support over 2,300,000 jobs in the United States;

Whereas, in 2022—

(1) commercial and recreational saltwater fishing in the United States generated \$321,000,000,000 in sales;

(2) angler trip expenditures totaled nearly \$13,412,000,000; and

(3) saltwater recreational fishing supported over 691,693 jobs, generated \$138,000,000,000 in sales impacts across the economy, and contributed \$45,100,000,000 in income impacts and \$74,900,000,000 in value-added impacts to the United States;

Whereas estuaries provide vital habitats for—

(1) countless species of fish and wildlife, including more than 68 percent of the commercial fish catch in the United States by value and 80 percent of the recreational fish catch in the United States by weight; and

(2) many species that are listed as threatened or endangered species;

Whereas estuaries provide critical ecosystem services that protect human health and public safety, including water filtration, flood control, shoreline stabilization, erosion prevention, and the protection of coastal communities during hurricanes, storms, and other extreme weather events;

Whereas, by the 1980s, the United States had already lost more than 50 percent of the wetlands that existed in the Thirteen Original Colonies;

Whereas some bays in the United States that were once filled with fish and oysters have become dead zones filled with excess nutrients, chemical waste, and marine debris;

Whereas harmful algal blooms are hurting fish, wildlife, and human health and are causing serious ecological and economic harm to some estuaries;

Whereas changes in sea level can affect estuarine water quality and estuarine habitats;

Whereas section 320 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1330) (commonly known as the “Clean Water Act”) authorizes the development of comprehensive conservation and management plans to ensure that the designated uses of estuaries are protected and to restore and maintain—

- (1) chemical, physical, and biological integrity;
- (2) water quality;
- (3) the balanced indigenous population of shellfish, fish, and wildlife; and
- (4) recreational activity;

Whereas the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1451 et seq.) provides that the policy of the United States is to preserve, protect, develop, and, if possible, restore or enhance the resources of the coastal zones of the United States, including estuaries, for current and future generations;

Whereas 34 coastal and Great Lakes States and territories of the United States operate or contain a National Estuary Program or a National Estuarine Research Reserve;

Whereas scientific study leads to a better understanding of the benefits of estuaries to human and ecological communities;

Whereas the Federal Government, State, local, and Tribal governments, national and community organizations, and individuals work together to effectively manage the estuaries of the United States;

Whereas estuary restoration efforts restore natural infrastructure in local communities in a cost-effective manner, helping to create jobs and reestablish the natural functions of estuaries that yield countless benefits; and

Whereas the week of September 21 through September 28, 2024, is recognized as “National Estuaries Week” to increase awareness among all people of the United States, including Federal Government and State, local, and Tribal government officials, of the importance of healthy estuaries and the need to protect and restore estuaries: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) expresses support for the designation of
3 “National Estuaries Week”;

4 (2) supports the goals and ideals of National
5 Estuaries Week;

6 (3) acknowledges the importance of estuaries to
7 sustaining employment in the United States and to
8 the economic well-being and prosperity of the United
9 States;

10 (4) recognizes that persistent threats under-
11 mine the health of estuaries;

12 (5) applauds the work of national and commu-
13 nity organizations and public partners that promote

1 public awareness, understanding, protection, and
2 restoration of estuaries;

3 (6) supports the scientific study, preservation,
4 protection, and restoration of estuaries; and

5 (7) expresses the intent of the Senate to con-
6 tinue working to understand, protect, and restore
7 the estuaries of the United States.