

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 966

To require the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to establish a Climate Change Education Program, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 25, 2021

Mr. MARKEY (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, Mr. BOOKER, Mr. CARDIN, Mr. DURBIN, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. HEINRICH, Ms. HIRONO, Mr. KING, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. LEAHY, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. MURPHY, Ms. ROSEN, Mr. SANDERS, Ms. SMITH, Ms. STABENOW, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. WARREN, and Mr. WYDEN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

A BILL

To require the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to establish a Climate Change Education Program, 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 “Climate Change Edu-
5 cation Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress makes the following findings:

1 (1) The evidence for human-induced climate
2 change is overwhelming and undeniable.

3 (2) Atmospheric carbon can be significantly re-
4 duced through conservation, by shifting to renewable
5 energy sources such as solar, wind, tidal, and geo-
6 thermal, and by increasing the efficiency of build-
7 ings, including domiciles, and transportation.

8 (3) Providing clear information about climate
9 change, in a variety of forms, can remove the fear
10 and the sense of helplessness, and encourage individ-
11 uals and communities to take action.

12 (4) Implementation of measures that promote
13 energy efficiency, conservation, and renewable en-
14 ergy will greatly reduce human impact on the envi-
15 ronment.

16 (5) Informing people of new technologies and
17 programs as they become available will ensure max-
18 imum understanding and maximum effect of those
19 measures.

20 (6) More than 3,000,000 students graduate
21 from high schools and colleges in the United States
22 each year, armed with attitudes, skills, and knowl-
23 edge about the climate that inform their actions.

1 (7) The effect on the climate, positive or nega-
2 tive, of each of those 3,000,000 students lasts be-
3 yond a lifetime.

4 (8) Those students need to be prepared to im-
5 plement changes in professional and personal prac-
6 tices, to support and help develop new technology
7 and policy, and to address the coming social and
8 economic challenges and opportunities arising from a
9 changing climate.

10 (9) It has been demonstrated that the people of
11 the United States overwhelmingly support teaching
12 students about the causes, consequences, and poten-
13 tial solutions to climate change in all 50 States and
14 more than 3,000 counties across the United States.

15 (10) Only 30 percent of middle school and 45
16 percent of high school science teachers understand
17 the extent of the scientific consensus on climate
18 change.

19 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

20 In this Act:

21 (1) **CLIMATE CHANGE EDUCATION.**—The term
22 “climate change education” means nonformal and
23 formal interdisciplinary learning at all age levels
24 about—

1 (A) climate change, climate adaptation and
2 mitigation, climate resilience, and climate jus-
3 tice; and

4 (B) the effects of climate change, climate
5 adaptation and mitigation, climate resilience,
6 and climate justice on the environmental, en-
7 ergy, social, and economic systems of the
8 United States.

9 (2) CLIMATE LITERACY.—The term “climate
10 literacy” means competence or knowledge of climate
11 change, its causes and impacts, and the technical,
12 scientific, economic, and social dynamics of prom-
13 ising solutions.

14 (3) CLIMATE JUSTICE.—The term “climate jus-
15 tice” means the fair treatment and meaningful in-
16 volvement of all people, regardless of race, color, cul-
17 ture, national origin, or income, with respect to the
18 development, implementation, and enforcement of
19 policies and projects to ensure that each person en-
20 joys the same degree of protection from the adverse
21 effects of climate change.

22 (4) ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE.—The term “en-
23 vironmental justice” means the fair treatment and
24 meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of
25 race, color, culture, national origin, or income, with

1 respect to the development, implementation, and en-
2 forcement of environmental laws, regulations, and
3 policies to ensure that each person enjoys—

4 (A) the same degree of protection from en-
5 vironmental and health hazards; and

6 (B) equal access to any Federal agency ac-
7 tion on environmental justice issues in order to
8 have a healthy environment in which to live,
9 learn, work, and recreate.

10 (5) ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COMMUNITY.—

11 The term “environmental justice community” means
12 a community with significant representation of com-
13 munities of color, low-income communities, or Tribal
14 and indigenous communities that experiences, or is
15 at risk of experiencing, higher or more adverse
16 human health or environmental effects as compared
17 to other communities.

18 (6) GREEN ECONOMY.—The term “green econ-
19 omy” means an economy that results in improved
20 human and economic well-being and social equity by
21 significantly reducing environmental risks and eco-
22 logical scarcities.

23 (7) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The
24 term “institution of higher education” has the

1 meaning given the term in section 101 of the Higher
2 Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001).

3 (8) LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY; STATE EDU-
4 CATIONAL AGENCY.—The terms “local educational
5 agency” and “State educational agency” have the
6 meanings given those terms in section 8101 of the
7 Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965
8 (20 U.S.C. 7801).

9 (9) NONFORMAL.—The term “nonformal”
10 means, with respect to learning, out-of-school edu-
11 cational programming carried out by nonprofit orga-
12 nizations and public agencies.

13 (10) NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION.—The term
14 “nonprofit organization” means an organization de-
15 scribed in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue
16 Code of 1986 and exempt from taxation under
17 501(a) of that Code.

18 **SEC. 4. CLIMATE CHANGE EDUCATION PROGRAM.**

19 The Administrator of the National Oceanic and At-
20 mospheric Administration shall establish a Climate
21 Change Education Program to—

22 (1) increase the climate literacy of the United
23 States by broadening the understanding of climate
24 change, including possible long-term and short-term

1 consequences, disproportionate impacts of those con-
2 sequences, and potential solutions;

3 (2) apply the latest scientific and technological
4 discoveries, including through the use of the sci-
5 entific assets of the Administration, to provide for-
6 mal and nonformal learning opportunities to individ-
7 uals of all ages, including individuals of diverse cul-
8 tural and linguistic backgrounds; and

9 (3) emphasize actionable information to help
10 people understand and promote implementation of
11 new technologies, programs, and incentives related
12 to climate change, climate adaptation and mitiga-
13 tion, climate resilience, climate justice, and environ-
14 mental justice.

15 **SEC. 5. GRANT PROGRAM.**

16 (a) IN GENERAL.—As part of the Climate Change
17 Education Program established under section 4, the Ad-
18 ministrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Ad-
19 ministration shall establish a program to make grants to
20 the following:

21 (1) State educational agencies, in partnership
22 with local educational agencies and local nonprofit
23 organizations, for the implementation of aspects of
24 State climate literacy plans for grades 4 through 12

1 formal and informal climate change education
2 that—

3 (A) are aligned with State education
4 standards;

5 (B) ensure that students graduate from
6 high school with climate literacy; and

7 (C) include at least 1 of the following:

8 (i) Relevant teacher training and pro-
9 fessional development.

10 (ii) Integration of key climate change
11 concepts into State education standards
12 for science, technology, engineering, and
13 mathematics (STEM), civics and social
14 studies, and other relevant subject areas
15 during the next revision of such standards.

16 (iii) Development of climate change
17 education educational frameworks and
18 model curricula and curation and dissemi-
19 nation of existing climate change cur-
20 riculum materials.

21 (iv) Creation of applied learning
22 project-based models, such as models mak-
23 ing optimum use of green features im-
24 provements to school facilities, such as en-
25 ergy systems, lighting systems, water man-

1 agement, waste management, and school
2 grounds improvements.

3 (v) Incorporation of climate change
4 mitigation and green technologies into new
5 and existing career and technical education
6 career tracks and work-based learning ex-
7 periences, including development of part-
8 nerships with labor organizations, trade or-
9 ganizations, and apprenticeship programs.

10 (2) Institutions of higher education and net-
11 works or partnerships of such institutions to engage
12 teams of faculty and students to develop applied cli-
13 mate research and deliver to local communities di-
14 rect services related to local climate mitigation and
15 adaptation issues, with priority given to projects
16 that—

17 (A) foster long-term campus-community
18 partnerships;

19 (B) show potential to scale work beyond
20 the grant term;

21 (C) are inclusive for all segments of the
22 population; and

23 (D) promote equitable and just outcomes.

24 (3) Professional associations and academic dis-
25 ciplinary societies for projects that build capacity at

1 the State and national levels for continuing edu-
2 cation by practicing professionals and the general
3 public in green economy fields.

4 (4) Youth corps organizations to engage in
5 community-based climate mitigation and adaptation
6 work that includes a substantive educational compo-
7 nent.

8 (b) CLIMATE CHANGE EDUCATION OFFICE.—

9 (1) IN GENERAL.—There shall be, within the
10 Office of Education of the National Oceanic and At-
11 mospheric Administration, an Office of Climate
12 Change Education to administer the grant program
13 required by subsection (a).

14 (2) CONSULTATION.—The Office of Climate
15 Change Education shall annually consult with other
16 relevant agencies of the Federal Government to de-
17 termine ways in which grant making under sub-
18 section (a) can enhance and support other national
19 climate education and training and environmental
20 justice goals.

21 (3) ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COMMUNITIES.—
22 The Office of Climate Change Education shall en-
23 sure that 40 percent of all funds appropriated for
24 grants under paragraphs (2) and (4) of subsection

1 (a) are directed into environmental justice commu-
2 nities.

3 (4) COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE.—The Office of
4 Climate Change Education shall establish commu-
5 nities of practice with respect to each of paragraphs
6 (1) through (4) of subsection (a) in order to accel-
7 erate learning.

8 **SEC. 6. REPORT.**

9 Not later than 2 years after the date of the enact-
10 ment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Adminis-
11 trator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Adminis-
12 tration shall submit to Congress a report that evaluates
13 the scientific merits, educational effectiveness, and broad-
14 er effects of activities carried out under this Act.

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

16 (a) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be appro-
17 priated to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Adminis-
18 tration to carry out this Act \$50,000,000 for each of fiscal
19 years 2021 through 2026.

20 (b) ALLOCATION OF AMOUNTS FOR GRANT PRO-
21 GRAM.—

22 (1) IN GENERAL.—Amounts appropriated to
23 carry out the grant program required by section 5(a)
24 shall be allocated as follows:

1 (A) 50 percent for grants made under
2 paragraph (1) of such section.

3 (B) 30 percent for grants made under
4 paragraph (2) of such section.

5 (C) 10 percent for grants made under
6 paragraph (3) of such section.

7 (D) 10 percent for grants made under
8 paragraph (4) of such section.

9 (2) EXCEPTION.—If amounts appropriated to
10 carry out the grant program required by section 5(a)
11 do not exceed \$5,000,000 in any fiscal year, the Na-
12 tional Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration may
13 use in that fiscal year—

14 (A) 60 percent of such amounts for grants
15 made under paragraph (1) of such section; and

16 (B) 40 percent of such amounts for grants
17 made under paragraph (2) of such section.

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