

Union Calendar No.

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION**H. R. 261****[Report No. 119-]**

To amend the National Marine Sanctuaries Act to prohibit requiring an authorization for the installation, continued presence, operation, maintenance, repair, or recovery of undersea fiber optic cables in a national marine sanctuary if such activities have previously been authorized by a Federal or State agency.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 9, 2025

Mr. CARTER of Georgia (for himself, Mr. DUNN of Florida, Mrs. CAMMACK, Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia, Mr. FRY, and Mr. PFLUGER) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

JULY --, 2025

Reported with amendments, committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, and ordered to be printed

[Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in *italic*]

[For text of introduced bill, see copy of bill as introduced on January 9, 2025]

A BILL

To amend the National Marine Sanctuaries Act to prohibit requiring an authorization for the installation, continued presence, operation, maintenance, repair, or recovery of undersea fiber optic cables in a national marine sanctuary if such activities have previously been authorized by a Federal or State agency.

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 “Undersea Cable Protec-*
5 *tion Act of 2025”.*

6 **SEC. 2. PROHIBITION ON PROHIBITING, OR REQUIRING**
7 **PERMITS OR OTHER AUTHORIZATIONS FOR,**
8 **UNDERSEA FIBER OPTIC CABLES AUTHOR-**
9 **IZED BY A FEDERAL OR STATE AGENCY.**

10 *The National Marine Sanctuaries Act (16 U.S.C. 1431*
11 *et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 310 the fol-*
12 *lowing:*

13 **“SEC. 310A. PROHIBITION ON PROHIBITING, OR REQUIRING**
14 **PERMITS OR OTHER AUTHORIZATIONS FOR,**
15 **UNDERSEA FIBER OPTIC CABLES AUTHOR-**
16 **IZED BY A FEDERAL OR STATE AGENCY.**

17 *“(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provi-*
18 *sion of this Act, the Secretary may not prohibit, or require*
19 *any permit, including any special use permit, or other au-*
20 *thorization for, the installation, continued presence, oper-*
21 *ation, maintenance, repair, or recovery of undersea fiber*
22 *optic cables in a national marine sanctuary if a license,*
23 *lease, or permit has been issued by a Federal or State agen-*
24 *cy, and is in effect, authorizing such installation, continued*
25 *presence, operation, maintenance, repair, or recovery.*

1 “(b) *INTERAGENCY COOPERATION.*—*Nothing in this*
2 *section shall be construed as altering existing requirements*
3 *regarding interagency cooperation under section 304(d) in*
4 *any Federal agency action described in that section and*
5 *involving the installation, continued presence, operation,*
6 *maintenance, repair, or recovery of undersea fiber optic ca-*
7 *bles in a national marine sanctuary.”.*

8 **SEC. 3. REMOVING RESTRICTIONS ON ACTIVITIES COVERED**
9 **BY SANCTUARY SPECIAL USE PERMITS.**

10 *Section 310(c) of National Marine Sanctuaries Act (16*
11 *U.S.C. 1441(c)) is amended—*

12 (1) *in paragraph (1), by adding “and” at the*
13 *end;*

14 (2) *by striking paragraphs (2) and (3); and*

15 (3) *by redesignating paragraph (4) as para-*
16 *graph (2).*

Amend the title so as to read: “A bill to amend the National Marine Sanctuaries Act to prohibit the Secretary of Commerce from prohibiting, or requiring any permit or other authorization for, the installation, continued presence, operation, maintenance, repair, or recovery of undersea fiber optic cables in a national marine sanctuary if such activities have been authorized by a Federal or State agency.”.