

119TH CONGRESS } 1st Session }	HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES {	REPORT 119-
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UNDERSEA CABLE PROTECTION ACT OF 2025

JULY --, 2025.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. WESTERMAN, from the Committee on Natural Resources,
submitted the following

R E P O R T

together with

____ VIEWS

[To accompany H.R. 261]

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on Natural Resources, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 261) 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, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon with amendments and recommends that the bill as amended do pass.

The amendments are as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Undersea Cable Protection Act of 2025”.

SEC. 2. PROHIBITION ON PROHIBITING, OR REQUIRING PERMITS OR OTHER AUTHORIZATIONS FOR, UNDERSEA FIBER OPTIC CABLES AUTHORIZED BY A FEDERAL OR STATE AGENCY.

The National Marine Sanctuaries Act (16 U.S.C. 1431 et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 310 the following:

“SEC. 310A. PROHIBITION ON PROHIBITING, OR REQUIRING PERMITS OR OTHER AUTHORIZATIONS FOR, UNDERSEA FIBER OPTIC CABLES AUTHORIZED BY A FEDERAL OR STATE AGENCY.

“(a) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, the Secretary may not prohibit, or require any permit, including any special use permit, or other authorization for, the installation, continued presence, operation, maintenance, re-

pair, or recovery of undersea fiber optic cables in a national marine sanctuary if a license, lease, or permit has been issued by a Federal or State agency, and is in effect, authorizing such installation, continued presence, operation, maintenance, repair, or recovery.

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

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

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

- (1) in paragraph (1), by adding “and” at the end;
- (2) by striking paragraphs (2) and (3); and
- (3) by redesignating paragraph (4) as paragraph (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.