



Safeguarding America's Future and Environment Act - S. 1202/H.R. 5065



Bison on range: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Protecting our lands and waters will safeguard invaluable benefits

Climate change poses an immediate and profound threat to the healthy natural systems that provide us with clean drinking water, clean air, food, crop pollination, tourism and other jobs, hunting and fishing opportunities, outdoor recreation, medicine, flood protection, scenic beauty, and numerous other services.

By coordinating the agencies that manage these resources, we can address these threats and continue to enjoy the benefits our natural systems currently offer. The SAFE Act will provide a national preparedness strategy as well as increased scientific capacity and coordination to address the impending threats to our resources. This planning will also maximize government efficiency and reduce costs to the public.



Ninepipe National Wildlife Refuge: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Introduced in the Senate by Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (RI) and in the House by Rep. Matt Cartwright (PA), the Safeguarding America's Future and Environment (SAFE) Act is designed to protect American communities, wildlife, and natural habitat from the increasingly destructive effects of climate change. This non-regulatory bill recognizes the countless benefits healthy natural resources provide to our country's health, safety, economy, and well-being, underscores the urgent need to help them adapt to our rapidly changing climate, and provides a roadmap to do so.



Forest habitat: U.S Fish and Wildlife Service

Restoring public lands, parks, and coastlines revitalizes local economies

Outdoor recreation – including camping, wildlife viewing, hunting, fishing, and other activities – is a powerful economic driver. Americans spend \$646 billion annually on outdoor recreation, nearly double the amount spent on pharmaceuticals (\$331 billion).¹ The outdoor industry supports over 6 million jobs, more than the amount generated by the construction industry. Natural resource conservation supports over 660,000 jobs and stimulates \$93 billion in direct economic activity.² A changing climate, however, puts these activities at risk.

By investing in our natural resources and wildlife we can continue to support a huge sector of our economy and ensure that local communities remain strong.

Conserving resources now makes them less vulnerable to costly damage from extreme weather events

Changing climates have created unusual weather events with devastating impacts. In 2012, the United States sustained 11 weather-related disasters in which overall damages reached or exceeded \$1 billion, for a total cost in excess of \$114 billion.³ Hurricane Sandy devastated the northeast, alone causing over \$65 billion in damages. 2013 also set records for extreme weather, including severe drought across the western states, record rainfall and flooding in Colorado, and extreme storms and tornadoes across the Midwest, Plains and Eastern states. In 2014, the trend continues with prolonged drought in the west, coupled with raging wildfires.



Firefighters on San Diego National Wildlife Refuge: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

These deadly events have been catastrophic for many Americans, destroying homes and costing billions. They are the type of events scientists predict will increase in frequency or intensity as the planet continues to warm. The SAFE Act will provide the tools to help our natural resource agencies prepare for these events.

The Safeguarding America's Future and Environment Act will:

- Build on the National Fish, Wildlife, and Plants Climate Adaptation Strategy to forge an integrated federal program to respond to ongoing and expected impacts of climate change by protecting, restoring, and conserving the natural resources of the United States.
- Maximize government efficiency and reduce costs and promote cooperation with state, local and tribal governments and other entities in preparing for climate-related changes.
- Ensure that increased scientific capacity is available and used to make critical decisions on how we manage the resources of the United States.



National Bison Range: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

¹ Outdoor Industry Association. The Outdoor Recreation Economy, 2012. <http://www.outdoorindustry.org/advocacy/recreation/resources.php>

² Southwick Associates. Conservation Economy, 2013. <http://www.avcrp.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/NFWF-Conservation-Economy-Rpt-Southwick-3-11-2013.pdf>

³ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Billion-Dollar U.S. Weather/Climate Disasters 1980-2013. <http://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/billions/events.pdf>