

Save our Seas (SOS) Act of 2017

Oceans and waterways across the planet are congested with debris that threaten critical habitat, pose a danger to wildlife, and litter shorelines. Because of ocean currents, intact marine debris from foreign countries travel great distances and pose problems for nations who are not responsible for the mismanagement of this waste. This is particularly true in the United States whose shores require the constant cleanup of foreign-sourced marine debris. As it currently stands, authorizations for important programs responsible for the removal of these debris have expired. Further, there are insufficient resources available to address this important problem.

The SOS Act received a zero score from the Congressional Budget Office.

Severe Marine Debris Events

This legislation would allow the NOAA Administrator to declare severe marine debris events and authorize funds to assist with cleanup and response. The Governor of the affected state may request the NOAA Administrator make this declaration.

Reauthorize NOAA's Marine Debris Program

This legislation would reauthorize NOAA's Office of Response and Restoration's Marine Debris Program through FY2022. Its mission is to conduct research on the source of marine debris and take action to prevent marine debris. The NOAA Marine Debris Program was authorized by the Marine Debris Act of 2006, and was last amended in 2012.

Encourage Action from the Administration

The SOS Act expresses that it is the sense of the Senate that the Executive Branch and U.S. Department of State should become more engaged in the understanding, prevention, and response to marine debris internationally. It would encourage that studies be conducted that would determine:

- The primary means by which marine debris enter the oceans.
- The manner in which waste management infrastructure can be most effective in preventing debris from reaching the oceans.
- The economic benefits of decreasing the amount of marine debris in the oceans.
- The long-term economic impacts of marine debris on the economies of the countries in the treaty.

The language also encourages the Executive Branch to enter into negotiations with the leaders of foreign countries that produce large amounts of trash to learn about and find solutions to the contributions of these countries to marine debris in the world's oceans. It would also support federally-funded research into the development of bio-based and other alternatives to materials that result in municipal solid waste. It would also encourage the creation of marine debris to be considered in future U.S. trade agreements.

Support

- This language is supported by the American Chemistry Council, the Ocean Conservancy, and the International Conservation Caucus Foundation.
- The bill is led by Senators Sullivan, Whitehouse, and Booker. Original Cosponsors include Senators Inhofe, Peters, Coons, Murkowski, and Tillis.

Please contact Alex Schenck in Senator Dan Sullivan's (R-AK) office with any questions or concerns - Alex.Schenck@Sullivan.Senate.Gov - 6-6760