

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. _____

To bolster United States engagement with the Pacific Islands region, and
for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO (for herself and Ms. ERNST) introduced the following bill;
which was read twice and referred to the Committee on

A BILL

To bolster United States engagement with the Pacific Islands
region, 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 “Pacific Partnership
5 Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

7 It is the sense of Congress as follows:

8 (1) The United States has longstanding and en-
9 during cultural, historic, economic, strategic, and
10 people-to-people connections with the Pacific Islands,

1 based on shared values, cultural histories, common
2 interests, and a commitment to fostering mutual un-
3 derstanding and cooperation.

4 (2) Successive United States administrations
5 have recognized the critical importance of the Pacific
6 Islands, to the world in high-level strategic docu-
7 ments, including the—

8 (A) 2015 National Security Strategy,
9 which first declared the rebalance to Asia and
10 the Pacific, affirmed the United States as a Pa-
11 cific nation, and paved the way for subsequent
12 United States engagement with the Pacific Is-
13 lands;

14 (B) 2017 National Security Strategy,
15 which includes a commitment to “shore up
16 fragile partner states in the Pacific Islands re-
17 gion to reduce their vulnerability to economic
18 fluctuations and natural disasters”;

19 (C) 2019 Indo-Pacific Strategy Report,
20 which identified the Pacific Islands as “critical
21 to United States strategy because of our shared
22 values, interests, and commitments”;

23 (D) 2022 Indo-Pacific Strategy Report,
24 which recognized the need to engage further

1 with the Pacific Islands on shared security
2 goals; and

3 (E) 2022 Strategy for Pacific Partnership,
4 which outlined goals and methods for deepening
5 the United States partnerships with Pacific Is-
6 land nations.

7 (3) The United States Government should fur-
8 ther develop, expand, and support a comprehensive
9 and multifaceted United States policy for the Pacific
10 Islands that—

11 (A) promotes peace, security, and pros-
12 perity for all countries that respects the sov-
13 ereignty and political independence of all na-
14 tions;

15 (B) preserves the Pacific Ocean as a cor-
16 ridor for international maritime economic op-
17 portunities and growth and promotes sustain-
18 able development;

19 (C) supports regional efforts to address
20 shared challenges, including by strengthening
21 resilience to natural disasters and stewardship
22 of natural resources; and

23 (D) strengthens democratic governance
24 and the rule of law, and promotes internation-

1 ally recognized human rights and the preserva-
2 tion of the region’s cultural heritages.

3 (4) The United States should collaborate closely
4 with existing regional multilateral institutions and
5 frameworks, such as the Pacific Islands Forum and
6 the Pacific Community.

7 (5) The United States should work closely with
8 United States allies and partners with existing rela-
9 tionships and interests in the Pacific Islands, such
10 as Australia, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand,
11 and Taiwan, and regional institutions like the Pa-
12 cific Islands Forum.

13 **SEC. 3. STRATEGY FOR PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP.**

14 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than January 1, 2026,
15 and again not later than January 1, 2030, the President,
16 in coordination with the Secretary of State, shall develop
17 and submit to the appropriate congressional committees
18 a strategy entitled the “Strategy for Pacific Partnership”
19 (in this section referred to as the “Strategy”).

20 (b) MATTERS TO BE INCLUDED.—The Strategy shall
21 include each of the following:

22 (1) A description of overarching goals for
23 United States engagement in the Pacific Islands re-
24 gion, including United States diplomatic posts, de-
25 fense posture, and economic engagement.

1 (2) An assessment of threats and pressures to
2 the Pacific Islands region including those caused by
3 factors such as—

4 (A) natural disasters;

5 (B) illegal, unreported, and unregulated
6 fishing;

7 (C) non-United States military presence
8 and activity;

9 (D) developmental challenges;

10 (E) economic coercion and corruption; and

11 (F) other factors assessed to be causing a
12 direct risk to the United States national inter-
13 ests in the Pacific Islands.

14 (3) A plan to address the threats assessed pur-
15 suant to paragraph (2).

16 (4) A plan for the resources necessary for the
17 United States to meet its goals in the Pacific Islands
18 region.

19 (5) Mechanisms, including existing forums, for
20 coordinating and cooperating on shared goals among
21 the following, as appropriate:

22 (A) the governments of Pacific Island
23 countries;

1 (B) regional partners in the Pacific Islands
2 region, including multilateral forums and orga-
3 nizations, such as the Pacific Islands Forum;

4 (C) civil society in the Pacific Islands; and

5 (D) United States subnational govern-
6 ments in the Pacific.

7 (c) CONSULTATION.—In developing the Strategy, the
8 President should consult, as appropriate, with—

9 (1) relevant United States governmental agen-
10 cies;

11 (2) regional organizations, such as the Pacific
12 Islands Forum, the Pacific Islands Development
13 Program, the Pacific Community, the Forum Fish-
14 eries Agency, and the Secretariat of the Pacific Re-
15 gional Environment Programme;

16 (3) the governments of the countries in the Pa-
17 cific Islands;

18 (4) civil society stakeholders;

19 (5) United States allies and partners; and

20 (6) United States Pacific territories and States.

21 **SEC. 4. EXTENSION OF DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITIES TO THE**
22 **PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM.**

23 The provisions of the International Organizations Im-
24 munities Act (22 U.S.C. 288 et seq.) may be extended to
25 the Pacific Islands Forum in the same manner, to the

1 same extent, and subject to the same conditions as such
2 provisions may be extended to a public international orga-
3 nization in which the United States participates pursuant
4 to any treaty or under the authority of any Act of Con-
5 gress authorizing such participation or making an appro-
6 priation for such participation.

7 **SEC. 5. ALLIES AND PARTNERS IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS**
8 **REGION.**

9 (a) IN GENERAL.—The President, in consultation
10 with the Secretary of State, and the relevant heads of
11 other Federal departments and agencies, should consult
12 and coordinate with allies and partners in the Pacific Is-
13 lands region, including Australia, Japan, New Zealand,
14 Taiwan, and regional institutions, such as the Pacific Is-
15 lands Forum, the Pacific Islands Development Program,
16 the Pacific Community and Secretariat for the Pacific Re-
17 gional Environment Programme, with respect to programs
18 to provide assistance to the Pacific Islands, including for
19 purposes of—

20 (1) deconflicting programming;

21 (2) ensuring that any programming does not
22 adversely affect the absorptive capacity of the Pa-
23 cific Islands;

1 (3) ensuring complementary programs benefit
2 the Pacific Islands to the maximum extent prac-
3 ticable; and

4 (4) ensuring that programming aligns with re-
5 gional development goals to promote a shared vision
6 for the future of the Pacific Islands.

7 (b) FORMAL CONSULTATIVE PROCESS.—The Presi-
8 dent should establish a formal consultative process with
9 such regional allies and partners to coordinate with re-
10 spect to such programs and future-years programming.

11 **SEC. 6. REPORTING.**

12 (a) UPDATES OF CERTAIN REPORTS.—

13 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of State, in
14 coordination with the heads of other Federal depart-
15 ments and agencies as appropriate, shall annually
16 update the reports listed in paragraph (2) to include
17 within the scope of such reports a regional discus-
18 sion of transnational crime affecting the Pacific Is-
19 lands.

20 (2) REPORTS LISTED.—The reports listed in
21 this paragraph are the following:

22 (A) The International Narcotics Control
23 Strategy report required by section 489 of the
24 Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C.
25 2291h).

1 (B) The Improving International Fisheries
2 Management report required by section 607 of
3 title VI of the Fisheries Act of 1995 (16 U.S.C.
4 1826h).

5 (C) The Trafficking in Persons report sub-
6 mitted under section 110 of the Trafficking
7 Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 U.S.C.
8 7107).

9 (b) MODIFICATION TO REPORT ON INDO-PACIFIC
10 REGION.—Section 5595(c) of the James M. Inhofe Na-
11 tional Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023
12 (Public Law 117–263; 136 Stat. 3393) is amended—

13 (1) by striking paragraph (1) and redesignating
14 paragraph (2) as paragraph (1);

15 (2) in paragraph (1), as so redesignated, by
16 striking “the 2022 Indo-Pacific Strategy, or suc-
17 cessor documents,” and inserting “any relevant
18 guidance documents”; and

19 (3) by inserting after paragraph (1), as so re-
20 designated, the following:

21 “(2) Implementing any relevant guidance docu-
22 ments that set forth the United States Government
23 strategy toward the Pacific Islands region.”.

24 **SEC. 7. DEFINITIONS.**

25 In this Act:

1 (1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMIT-
2 TEES.—The term “appropriate congressional com-
3 mittees” means—

4 (A) the Committee on Foreign Affairs of
5 the House of Representatives; and

6 (B) the Committee on Foreign Relations of
7 the Senate.

8 (2) PACIFIC ISLANDS; PACIFIC ISLANDS RE-
9 GION.—The term “Pacific Islands” and “Pacific Is-
10 lands region” mean the nations, territories, and
11 other jurisdictions in the Pacific Ocean within the
12 broad groupings of Melanesia, Micronesia, and Poly-
13 nesia.