A BILL

To establish an Alaska Salmon Research Task Force.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-
tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Alaska Salmon Re-
search Task Force Act”.

SEC. 2. PURPOSES.

The purposes of this Act are—

(1) to ensure that Pacific salmon trends in
Alaska regarding productivity and abundance are
characterized and that research needs are identified;
(2) to prioritize scientific research needs for Pacific salmon in Alaska;

(3) to address the increased variability or decline in Pacific salmon returns in Alaska by creating a coordinated salmon research strategy; and

(4) to support collaboration and coordination for Pacific salmon conservation efforts in Alaska.

SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.

It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) salmon are an essential part of Alaska’s fisheries, including subsistence, commercial, and recreational uses, and there is an urgent need to better understand the freshwater and marine biology and ecology of salmon, a migratory species that crosses many borders, and for a coordinated salmon research strategy to address salmon returns that are in decline or experiencing increased variability;

(2) salmon are an essential element for the well-being and health of Alaskans; and

(3) there is a unique relationship between people of Indigenous heritage and the salmon they rely on for subsistence and traditional and cultural practices.
SEC. 4. ALASKA SALMON RESEARCH TASK FORCE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Commerce, in consultation with the Governor of Alaska, shall convene an Alaska Salmon Research Task Force (referred to in this section as the “Research Task Force”) to—

(1) review existing Pacific salmon research;

(2) identify applied research needed to better understand the increased variability and declining salmon returns in some regions of Alaska; and

(3) support sustainable management of salmon in Alaska.

(b) COMPOSITION AND APPOINTMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Research Task Force shall be composed of not fewer than 13 and not more than 19 members, who shall be appointed under paragraphs (2) and (3).

(2) APPOINTMENT BY SECRETARY.—The Secretary of Commerce shall appoint members to the Research Task Force as follows:

(A) One representative from each of the following:

(i) The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration who is knowledgeable about salmon and salmon research ef-
forts in Alaska and is from the Alaska Region.


(iii) The United States section of the Pacific Salmon Commission.

(B) Not less than 2 and not more than 5 representatives from each of the following categories, at least 2 of whom shall represent Alaska Natives who possess personal knowledge of, and direct experience with, subsistence uses in rural Alaska, to be appointed with due regard to differences in regional perspectives and experience:

(i) Residents of Alaska who possess personal knowledge of, and direct experience with, subsistence uses in rural Alaska.

(ii) Alaska fishing industry representatives throughout the salmon supply chain, including from—

(I) directed commercial fishing;

(II) recreational fishing;

(III) charter fishing;

(IV) seafood processors;
(V) salmon prohibited species
catch (bycatch) users; or
(VI) hatcheries.
(C) 5 representatives who are academic ex-
perts in salmon biology, salmon management,
salmon ecology (marine and freshwater), or
comprehensive marine research planning in the
North Pacific.

(3) APPOINTMENT BY THE GOVERNOR OF ALAS-
KA.—The Governor of Alaska shall appoint to the
Research Task Force one representative from the
State of Alaska who is knowledgeable about the
State of Alaska’s salmon management and research
efforts.

(c) DUTIES.—
(1) REVIEW.—The Research Task Force
shall—
(A) conduct a review of Pacific salmon
science relevant to understanding and managing
salmon returns in Alaska, including an exam-
ination of—
(i) traditional ecological knowledge of
salmon populations and their ecosystems;
(ii) marine carrying capacity and den-
sity dependent constraints, including an
examination of interactions with other salmon species, and with forage base in marine ecosystems;

(iii) life-cycle and stage-specific mortality;

(iv) genetic sampling and categorization of population structure within salmon species in Alaska;

(v) methods for predicting run-timing and stock sizes;

(vi) oceanographic models that provide insight into stock distribution, growth, and survival;

(vii) freshwater, estuarine, and marine processes that affect survival of smolts;

(viii) climate effects on freshwater and marine habitats;

(ix) predator/prey interactions between salmon and marine mammals or other predators; and

(x) salmon productivity trends in other regions, both domestic and international, that put Alaska salmon populations in a broader geographic context; and
(B) identify scientific research gaps in understanding the Pacific salmon life-cycle in Alaska.

(2) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date the Research Task Force is convened, the Research Task Force shall submit to the Secretary of Commerce, the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate, the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate, the Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies of the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate, the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives, the Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies of the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives, and the Alaska State Legislature, and make publicly available, a report—

(A) describing the review conducted under paragraph (1); and

(B) that includes—

(i) recommendations on filling knowledge gaps that warrant further scientific inquiry; and
(ii) findings from the reports of work groups submitted under subsection (d)(2)(C).

(d) ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS.—

(1) CHAIRPERSON AND VICE CHAIRPERSON.—

The Research Task Force shall select a Chair and Vice Chair by vote from among the members of the Research Task Force.

(2) WORK GROUPS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Research Task Force—

(i) not later than 30 days after the date of the establishment of the Research Task Force, shall establish a work group focused specifically on salmon returns in the AYK (Arctic-Yukon-Kuskoskim) regions of Western Alaska; and

(ii) may establish additional regionally or stock focused work groups within the Research Task Force, as members determine appropriate.

(B) COMPOSITION.—Each work group established under this subsection shall—

(i) consist of not less than 5 individuals who—
(I) are knowledgeable about the stock or region under consideration; and

(II) need not be members of the Research Task Force; and

(ii) be balanced in terms of stakeholder representation, including commercial, recreational, and subsistence fisheries, as well as experts in statistical, biological, economic, social, or other scientific information as relevant to the work group’s focus.

(C) REPORTS.—Not later than 9 months after the date the Research Task Force is convened, each work group established under this subsection shall submit a report with the work group’s findings to the Research Task Force.

(3) COMPENSATION.—Each member of the Research Task Force shall serve without compensation.

(4) ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT.—The Secretary of Commerce shall provide such administrative support as is necessary for the Research Task Force and its work groups to carry out their duties, including support for virtual or in-person participation and travel expenses.
(e) Federal Advisory Committee Act.—The Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.) shall not apply to the Research Task Force.