

Headwaters Protection Act of 2023: Legislation Introduced in United States Senate Expanding Two United States Forest Service Programs



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Several United States Senators introduced legislation titled:

Headwaters Protection Act of 2023 ("Act")

The legislation was introduced by:

- Senator Michael Bennet
- Senator Mike Crapo
- Senator Dianne Feinstein
- Senator James Risch
- Senator Ben Ray Luján
- Senator Mark Kelly
- Senator John Hickenlooper
- Senator Martin Heinrich

The legislation would expand support for two United States Forest Service ("Service") programs that had been created by the 2018 Farm Bill.

The programs addressed include:

- Water Source Protection Program
- Watershed Condition Framework

The objectives of the two Service programs are stated to:

- Prevent water pollution at the source
- Improve the health of watersheds
- Ensure investments benefit downstream communities

The *Act* would:

- Increase funding
- Expand access to funding
- Direct the programs to prioritize local, collaborative partnerships to protect forests and wetlands
- Create dedicated funding for the Watershed Condition Framework

- Make a technical change to the Watershed Condition Framework to ensure management activities in the National Forest do not lead to long-term degradation of the watersheds

The *Act* is stated to:

- Reauthorize the Water Source Protection Program and increase the authorization of appropriations for the program from \$10 million per year to \$30 million per year
- Broaden the range of water users to include historically disadvantaged communities who can participate and benefit
- Reduce financial barriers for water users to participate in the Water Source Protection Program
- Prioritize Water Source Protection Program projects that benefit drinking water quality and improve resilience to wildfire and climate change
- Make a technical change to the Watershed Condition Framework to ensure healthy watersheds do not become degraded
- Authorize \$30 million in new appropriations per year for the Watershed Condition Framework

A copy of the *Act* can be downloaded [here](#).