

SLASHING FUNDING FOR ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION AND CONSERVATION CORPS ON FEDERAL LANDS

Failed: 48-50

SUMMARY:

The Senate rejected an amendment to cut funding for the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture to address ecosystem resilience and wildfire management while prioritizing employment for conservation corps, young adults and veterans. (*August 4, 2021, Roll Call No. 303*)

BACKGROUND:

Congress has repeatedly attempted to pass legislation to fund infrastructure improvements across the country. In addition to traditional infrastructure like surface transportation projects, advocates have long sought investments for the country's nature-based infrastructure. Funding activities to improve ecosystem resilience and restore habitat can simultaneously protect vulnerable wildlife and create jobs for local economies. Youth and conservation programs like the Civilian Conservation Corps are an excellent way to improve nature-based infrastructure while offering workers high-paying jobs.

Senator Steve Daines (R-Mont.) offered an amendment to the bipartisan infrastructure legislation, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, to reduce funding for resilience and restoration. The Senate version of H.R. 3648 included provisions to provide hundreds of millions of dollars to the Department of Agriculture and Department of the Interior to address wildfire risks and restore ecosystems. The Daines amendment would strike language to prioritize employment of young adults, Native American youth, and veterans. The amendment would also repurpose that spending by funding state-level forestry activities that have little oversight and few conservation standards.

OUTCOME:

On August 4, 2021, the Senate rejected the Daines Amendment, 48-50. "Nay" was the pro-conservation vote.