

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. _____

To establish youth advisory councils for the purpose of providing recommendations to the Environmental Protection Agency, Department of the Interior, Department of Energy, Department of Agriculture, and Department of Commerce with respect to environmental issues as those issues relate to youth communities, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. MARKEY introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To establish youth advisory councils for the purpose of providing recommendations to the Environmental Protection Agency, Department of the Interior, Department of Energy, Department of Agriculture, and Department of Commerce with respect to environmental issues as those issues relate to youth communities, 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 “Youth Climate Leader-
5 ship Act of 2026”.

1 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

2 In this Act:

3 (1) COVERED AGENCY HEAD.—The term “cov-
4 ered agency head” means each of the following
5 heads of agencies:

6 (A) The Administrator of the Environ-
7 mental Protection Agency.

8 (B) The Secretary of the Interior.

9 (C) The Secretary of Energy.

10 (D) The Secretary of Agriculture.

11 (E) The Secretary of Commerce.

12 (2) DESIGNATED FEDERAL OFFICER.—The
13 term “designated Federal officer” means the des-
14 ignated Federal officer for a Youth Advisory Council
15 appointed under section 3(b)(6).

16 (3) DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITY.—The term
17 “disadvantaged community” means a community
18 identified as a disadvantaged community by the
19 Justice40 Initiative (or a successor initiative) and
20 the Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool of
21 the Council on Environmental Quality (or a suc-
22 cessor tool).

23 (4) ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE.—The term “en-
24 vironmental justice” means the just treatment and
25 meaningful involvement of all people, without regard
26 to income, race, color, national origin, Tribal affili-

1 ation, or disability, in agency decisionmaking and
2 other Federal activities that affect human health
3 and the environment so that people—

4 (A) are fully protected from dispro-
5 portionate and adverse human health and environ-
6 mental effects (including risks) and hazards, in-
7 cluding those related to climate change, the cu-
8 mulative impacts of environmental and other
9 burdens, and the legacy of racism or other
10 structural or systemic barriers; and

11 (B) have equitable access to a healthy, sus-
12 tainable, and resilient environment in which to
13 live and engage in cultural and subsistence
14 practices.

15 (5) YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL.—The term
16 “Youth Advisory Council” means a Youth Advisory
17 Council established by a covered agency head pursu-
18 ant to section 3(a).

19 **SEC. 3. YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCILS.**

20 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Each covered agency head
21 shall establish within the respective agency of the covered
22 agency head a Youth Advisory Council for the purpose of
23 providing recommendations to the applicable covered
24 agency head with respect to governmental approaches to

1 environmental issues as those issues relate to youth, in-
2 cluding—

3 (1) recommendations with respect to programs
4 to help the governments of disadvantaged commu-
5 nities address environmental issues in those dis-
6 advantaged communities;

7 (2) recommendations with respect to perform-
8 ance measures that could be used to measure the
9 impact of climate change and other environmental
10 harms that affect youth communities; and

11 (3) researching, writing reports on, and making
12 recommendations with a focus on environmental jus-
13 tice, climate change mitigation and resiliency, and
14 pollution reduction.

15 (b) MEMBERSHIP.—

16 (1) SIZE.—A Youth Advisory Council shall con-
17 sist of not fewer than 15, and not greater than 25,
18 representative members of non-Federal interests
19 that have demonstrated high levels of knowledge and
20 expertise in environmental issues, to be appointed by
21 the applicable covered agency head.

22 (2) REQUIREMENTS.—

23 (A) AGE.—A member of a Youth Advisory
24 Council shall have an age, at the time of ap-
25 pointment or reappointment under paragraph

1 (4), of not less than 16 years and not more
2 than 29 years.

3 (B) GEOGRAPHIC DIVERSITY REQUIRED.—
4 A covered agency head shall seek to ensure that
5 members of a Youth Advisory Council are from
6 geographically diverse locations across the
7 United States.

8 (C) CONSIDERATION OF BACKGROUNDS.—

9 (i) IN GENERAL.—In selecting mem-
10 bers of a Youth Advisory Council, a cov-
11 ered agency head shall consider candidates
12 with varying backgrounds, including—

- 13 (I) business and industry;
14 (II) academic institutions;
15 (III) State, local, and Tribal gov-
16 ernments;
17 (IV) public interest groups;
18 (V) environmental organizations;
19 and
20 (VI) service groups.

21 (ii) REQUIREMENT.—Of the members
22 of a Youth Advisory Council, not more
23 than 60 percent may come from any 1 cat-
24 egory described in clause (i).

1 (D) REPRESENTATION OF DISADVANTAGED
2 COMMUNITIES.—Of the members of a Youth
3 Advisory Council, not less than 50 percent shall
4 come from, reside primarily in, or work pri-
5 marily in disadvantaged communities.

6 (E) DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND
7 ACCESSIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS.—In selecting
8 members of a Youth Advisory Council, a cov-
9 ered agency head shall consider diversity, eq-
10 uity, inclusion, and accessibility, in accordance
11 with Executive Order 14035 (86 Fed. Reg.
12 34593 (June 30, 2021); relating to diversity,
13 equity, inclusion, and accessibility in the Fed-
14 eral workforce).

15 (3) TERM.—A member of a Youth Advisory
16 Council shall serve for a term of 2 years.

17 (4) REAPPOINTMENT.—A covered agency head
18 may reappoint members of a Youth Advisory Council
19 to that Youth Advisory Council.

20 (5) VACANCIES.—A vacancy in a Youth Advi-
21 sory Council—

22 (A) shall not affect the powers of the
23 Youth Advisory Council; and

24 (B) shall be filled in the same manner as
25 the original appointment.

1 (6) DESIGNATED FEDERAL OFFICER.—Each
2 covered agency head shall appoint a full-time em-
3 ployee of the agency of the covered agency head to
4 serve as the designated Federal officer for the appli-
5 cable Youth Advisory Council.

6 (7) CO-CHAIRPERSONS; VICE-CHAIRPERSONS.—
7 Each covered agency head shall, from among the
8 members of the applicable Youth Advisory Council,
9 appoint 2 co-chairpersons and 2 vice-chairpersons.

10 (c) MEETINGS.—

11 (1) FREQUENCY.—A Youth Advisory Council
12 shall meet at the call of the applicable designated
13 Federal officer, but not less frequently than annu-
14 ally.

15 (2) OPEN MEETINGS.—The meetings of a
16 Youth Advisory Council shall be open to the public
17 unless the covered agency head determines, in ac-
18 cordance with section 552b(c) of title 5, United
19 States Code, to close a meeting or portion of a meet-
20 ing.

21 (3) AGENDA.—The agenda of a meeting of a
22 Youth Advisory Council shall be approved in advance
23 by the applicable designated Federal officer.

24 (4) REQUIREMENT.—A Youth Advisory Council
25 or subcommittee of a Youth Advisory Council may

1 not meet without the presence of the applicable des-
2 ignated Federal officer (or a designee).

3 (5) PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.—A person inter-
4 ested in the proceedings of a Youth Advisory Council
5 or interested in providing comment on a matter be-
6 fore a Youth Advisory Council may—

7 (A) attend meetings of the Youth Advisory
8 Council;

9 (B) appear before the Youth Advisory
10 Council; and

11 (C) file written comments with the Youth
12 Advisory Council.

13 (6) ADJOURNMENT.—The designated Federal
14 officer for a Youth Advisory Council may adjourn
15 the meeting of the Youth Advisory Council if the
16 designated Federal officer determines it is in the
17 public interest to do so.

18 (d) SUBCOMMITTEES.—A Youth Advisory Council
19 may establish subcommittees as determined appropriate
20 by the Youth Advisory Council.

21 (e) EDUCATION.—Each covered agency head shall de-
22 velop and provide to members of the Youth Advisory
23 Council an educational curriculum, which shall include
24 briefings on the organizational structure and work of the
25 agency of the covered agency head.

1 (f) REPORTS.—Not less frequently than annually, a
2 Youth Advisory Council shall submit to the applicable cov-
3 ered agency head a report describing any recommenda-
4 tions of the Youth Advisory Council made in accordance
5 with subsection (a).

6 (g) ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT.—The agency of a
7 covered agency head shall provide administrative support
8 to the Youth Advisory Council of the agency.

9 (h) APPLICABILITY OF FACA.—Section 1013 of title
10 5, United States Code, shall not apply to a Youth Advisory
11 Council.

12 (i) APPLICABILITY TO EXISTING COUNCILS.—The
13 Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency
14 may, in accordance with this Act, designate the National
15 Environmental Youth Advisory Council as the Youth Advi-
16 sory Council of the Environmental Protection Agency.

17 **SEC. 4. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

18 There is authorized to be appropriated \$250,000 to
19 each of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Depart-
20 ment of the Interior, the Department of Energy, the De-
21 partment of Agriculture, and the Department of Com-
22 merce for each of fiscal years 2027 through 2037 for the
23 purpose of carrying out this Act.