

CLIMATE ADAPTATION SCIENCE CENTERS ACT

DECEMBER 7, 2022.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. GRIJALVA, from the Committee on Natural Resources,  
submitted the following

R E P O R T

together with

DISSENTING VIEWS

[To accompany H.R. 6654]

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on Natural Resources, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 6654) to direct the Secretary of the Interior to establish a National Climate Adaptation Science Center and Regional Climate Adaptation Science Centers to respond to the effects of extreme weather events and climate trends, and for other purposes, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon with an amendment and recommends that the bill as amended do pass.

The amendment is as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

**SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

This Act may be cited as the “Climate Adaptation Science Centers Act” or the “CASC Act”.

**SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

In this Act:

(1) ADAPTATION.—The term “adaptation” means—

(A) the process of adjustment to actual or expected climate and the effects of extreme weather, climate trends, and climate variability; and

(B) protection, management, and conservation efforts designed to maintain or enhance the ability of people, fish, wildlife, plants, land, ecosystems, and water of the United States to withstand, adjust to, or recover from the effects of extreme weather, climate trends, and climate variability.

(2) ADVISORY SERVICE ACTIVITIES.—The term “advisory service activities” means activities including—

- (A) sharing climate science and climate adaptation knowledge between National and Regional Climate Adaptation Science Center researchers, stakeholders, and other partners;
  - (B) building collaborations between National and Regional Climate Adaptation Science Center researchers, stakeholders, and other partners; and
  - (C) integrating climate adaptation science into natural and cultural resource management, decision-making and planning.
- (2) CULTURAL RESOURCES.—The term “cultural resources”—
- (A) means those features and values related to cultural heritage; and
  - (B) includes—
    - (i) biological species with cultural heritage or ceremonial importance, and historic and precontact sites, cultural landscapes, trails, structures, inscriptions, art, and artifacts on Federal lands or representative of the culture of Indian Tribes, Native Hawaiians, and Native American Pacific Islanders; and
    - (ii) resources considered to be cultural resources according to the traditional knowledge of Indian Tribes, Native Hawaiians, and Native American Pacific Islanders.
- (3) COMMITTEE.—The term “Committee” means the Advisory Committee on Climate and Natural Resource Sciences established under section 6.
- (4) CONSORTIUM INSTITUTION.—The term “consortium institution” means college, university, State cooperative institution, State agency, Indian Tribe, Tribal College or University, Historically Black College or University, Tribal organization, Native Hawaiian organization, minority-serving institution, or other educational institution or organization, Federal agency, public or private organization, or any other party within each regional center other than the United States Geological Survey and the host institution.
- (5) DEPARTMENT.—The term “Department” means the Department of the Interior.
- (6) ECOSYSTEM SERVICES.—The term “ecosystem services” means those benefits that ecosystems provide humans and human society, including clean air, clean water, and other economically important services.
- (7) HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES.—The term “Historically Black Colleges and Universities” has the same meaning given the term “part B institutions” in section 322 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1061).
- (8) HOST INSTITUTION.—The term “host institution” means the non-Federal lead organization within each regional center.
- (9) INDIAN TRIBE.—The term “Indian Tribe” has the meaning given the term in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304(e)).
- (10) MINORITY-SERVING INSTITUTION.—The term “minority-serving institution” means a Hispanic-serving institution, an Alaska Native-serving institution, a Native Hawaiian-serving institution, a Predominantly Black Institution, an Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-serving institution, or a Native American-serving nontribal institution (as described in section 371 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1067q(a))).
- (11) NATIONAL CENTER.—The term “National Center” means the National Climate Adaptation Science Center established under section 3(a).
- (12) NATIVE AMERICAN PACIFIC ISLANDERS.—The term “Native American Pacific Islanders” means any descendent of the aboriginal people of any island in the Pacific Ocean that is a territory of the United States.
- (13) NATIVE HAWAIIAN.—The term “Native Hawaiian” means any individual who is a descendant of the aboriginal people who, prior to 1778, occupied and exercised sovereignty in the area that now constitutes the State of Hawaii.
- (14) NATIVE HAWAIIAN ORGANIZATION.—The term “Native Hawaiian organization” means—
- (A) the Office of Hawaiian Affairs;
  - (B) Hui Malama I Na Kupuna O Hawai'i Nei; and
  - (C) any other organization that—
    - (i) serves and represents the interests of Native Hawaiians;
    - (ii) has as a primary and stated purpose the provision of services to Native Hawaiians; and
    - (iii) has expertise in Native Hawaiian Affairs.
- (15) NATURAL RESOURCES.—The term “natural resources” has the meaning given that term in section 11.14 of title 43, Code of Federal Regulations.
- (16) REGIONAL CENTER.—The term “regional center” means one of the Regional Climate Adaptation Science Centers established under section 3(a) that provide support for specific geographic locations in the United States.

- (17) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Interior.
- (18) STATE.—The term “State” means—
- (A) a State of the United States;
  - (B) the District of Columbia;
  - (C) American Samoa;
  - (D) Guam;
  - (E) the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands;
  - (F) Puerto Rico; and
  - (G) the Virgin Islands of the United States.
- (19) TRIBAL COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY.—The term “Tribal College or University” means an institution that—
- (A) qualifies for funding under the Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities Assistance Act of 1978 (25 U.S.C. 1801 et seq.) or the Navajo Community College Act (25 U.S.C. 640a note); or
  - (B) is cited in section 532 of the Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 301 note).
- (20) TRIBAL ORGANIZATION.—The term “Tribal organization” means—
- (A) the recognized governing body of any Indian Tribe; or
  - (B) any legally established organization of Indians that is—
    - (i) controlled, sanctioned, or chartered by the recognized governing body of an Indian Tribe; or
    - (ii) (I) democratically elected by the adult members of the Indian community to be served by such organization; and
    - (II) includes the maximum participation of Indians in all phases of its activities.
- (21) UNIVERSITY.—The term “university” has the meaning given to the term “institution of higher education” in section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001(a)).

### SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT AND DUTIES.

#### (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary, in collaboration with States, Indian Tribes, and other partner organizations, shall establish a program to be known as the “National and Regional Climate Adaptation Science Centers”, which shall—

(A) provide scientific expertise to agencies, organizations, individuals, Indian Tribes, tribal organizations, and Native Hawaiian organizations engaged in the management of natural resources, cultural resources, and ecosystem services for the purpose of informing decisions that aid adaptation to a changing climate and extreme weather events; and

(B) include a National Climate Adaptation Science Center and Regional Climate Adaptation Science Centers.

#### (2) CHIEF; DIRECTORS.—

(A) CHIEF.—The Chief of the National Center shall be a United States Geological Survey employee and shall be responsible for national-scale and network-wide strategic initiatives, science direction, and partnerships.

(B) DIRECTORS.—Each regional center shall have—

(i) a Federal Director who shall—

(I) be a United States Geological Survey employee;

(II) report directly to the Chief of the National Center; and

(III) be responsible for region-specific and cross-regional strategic initiatives and implementation of climate science research agendas; and

(ii) a Host Institution Director who shall—

(I) carry out the terms and conditions of the financial assistance award;

(II) lead the institutional consortium in each region; and

(III) oversee training and capacity building at the host and consortium institutions.

(C) COOPERATIVE WORK.—Each Regional Federal Director and each Host Institution Director shall work cooperatively to further the mission of the relevant regional center.

(D) ADMINISTRATION.—The National Center and all regional centers shall be administered by the United States Geological Survey.

(b) DUTIES OF THE NATIONAL CENTER.—In collaboration with Federal agencies, States, Indian Tribes, Tribal organizations, Native Hawaiians, Native Hawaiian organizations, Native American Pacific Islanders, and other partner organizations, the National Center shall—

(1) serve as the national office for the regional centers;

(2) provide leadership and guidance on administration, partnerships, information management, and communications;

(3) develop and facilitate coordination among the regional centers;

(4) coordinate and collaborate with other Federal agencies working on similar research and activities to—

(A) minimize, as much as possible, the duplication of research and effort; and

(B) use, as much as possible, existing data in the development of new or ongoing research;

(5) conduct research on cross-regional and national science priorities;

(6) support regional centers that—

(A) are hosted at a university, or a consortium of universities or other research institutions, within the region of each regional center;

(B) are collaborations between the Federal Director and the Host Institution Director and their staffs to address the broad scientific mission and goals as defined by the National Center in a manner that is relevant to its specific geographic region and in cooperation with State and local governments, Indian Tribes, Tribal organizations, Native Hawaiians, Native Hawaiian organizations, Native American Pacific Islanders, and other entities within that region;

(C) promote research, education, training, and advisory service activities to stakeholders, Tribal governments, and the public via informational publications, trainings, and other outreach methods; and

(D) receive funding at the host institution through cooperative agreements, contracts, and grants under section 4; and

(7) acting through the Chief of the National Center, with respect to the regional centers—

(A) evaluate and assess the performance of the programs of regional centers every five years, using the priorities, guidelines, and qualifications established by the Secretary under this section, and determine if the programs are well managed and carry out high-quality research, education, training, and advisory service activities; and

(B) subject to the availability of appropriations, allocate funding among regional centers so as to—

(i) conduct regionally relevant research, education, training, and advisory service activities in each of the regions;

(ii) encourage collaborations among regional centers to address regional and national priorities established under this section;

(iii) ensure successful implementation and operation of regional centers;

(iv) to the maximum extent consistent with other provisions of this Act, provide a stable base of funding in support of the regional centers on 5-year terms, with additional funds available annually subject to the availability of appropriations;

(v) encourage and promote coordination and cooperation between the research, education, training, and advisory service activities of the Department and those of the host and consortium institutions; and

(vi) pay the official Federal Government negotiated overhead rate to the host institution and partners on the basic agreement establishing the location of the regional center.

(c) **AUTHORITIES OF THE NATIONAL CENTER.**—The National Center may—

(1) procure the services of appropriate public and private agencies and institutions and other qualified persons to conduct its work; and

(2) operate and fund a network of not fewer than nine regional centers that shall address the impacts of climate trends and variability, including extreme weather events, on natural and cultural resources and ecosystem services.

(d) **DESIGNATION OF THE REGIONAL CENTERS.**—

(1) **EXISTING REGIONAL CENTER DESIGNATIONS.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—Any institution or consortium of institutions designated as a regional center before the date of enactment of this Act shall participate in one final competition for its status as a regional center upon the conclusion of its existing 5-year term to assure that the host institutions and association consortium institutions update proposals recognizing the long-term commitment as a host.

(B) **RECOMPETES.**—After the next competition for regional center after the date of enactment of this Act, a designated regional center shall not have to recompete on 5-year terms, but shall be subject to review on 5-year terms as described in paragraph (2). After competed, the final agreements shall only be recompleted in the event of a failed review.

(2) **REVIEWS OF THE REGIONAL CENTERS.**—

(A) The Chief of the National Center, in consultation with the Committee, shall establish guidelines for 5-year merit reviews of each regional center, which shall include guidelines for —

(i) the establishment of a statement of objectives, agreed upon by the National Center and regional host institutions at the beginning of the 5-year term, that outline the expectations of activities or measures of success to be completed during the agreed upon period; and

(ii) an independent merit review, conducted by the National Center, of the host institution's activities as related to the statement of objectives.

(B) If a regional center does not meet the requirements included in the statement of objective as determined by the independent merit review referred to in subparagraph (A)(ii), the host institution or consortium of institutions may not continue as a host of a regional center.

(C) If a host institution or consortium of institution fails a merit review referred to in subparagraph (A)(ii), the Chief of the National Center may give the host institution or consortium of institutions a probationary period of one year. After the one-year probationary period, the Chief of the National Center shall undertake an additional review referred to in subparagraph (A)(ii) to determine if the host institution or consortium of institutions shall—

(i) continue as a host of a regional center; or

(ii) not continue as a host of a regional center, in which case the Chief of the National Center shall initiate a competitive process to select a new host institution .

(D) The Chief of the National Center shall ensure that reviews completed pursuant to this paragraph are publicly available.

(2) **CHANGES TO CONSORTIUM INSTITUTIONS.**—The Chief of the National Center, in consultation with the Federal Director and Host Institution Director of a regional center, may add or remove consortium institutions at any time to address regional and national priorities established under this section.

(3) **FACA.**—Committees, subcommittees, and working groups appointed by Federal Directors of the regional centers pursuant to this subsection shall not be subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.).

(e) **DUTIES OF THE REGIONAL CENTERS.**—In collaboration with Federal and State natural resources agencies and departments, Indian Tribes, Tribal organizations, Native Hawaiians, Native Hawaiian organizations, Native American Pacific Islanders, Tribal Colleges or Universities, Historically Black Colleges or Universities, minority-serving institutions, universities, other research or educational institutions, and other partner organizations, regional centers shall develop research, education, training, and advisory service priorities regarding the impacts of climate trends and variability on natural and cultural resource management in their regions for the purpose of climate adaptation.

(f) **PROJECT SOLICITATION .**—Subject to the availability of appropriations, each regional center shall undergo a project solicitation process annually that shall—

(1) include regionally identified science priority topics;

(2) work with science partners in the region to develop a scientific review process to assure the highest quality of proposals are selected; and

(3) final decisions on annual project selections shall be made by the Federal Directors of the regional centers.

**SEC. 4. GENERAL AUTHORITY TO ENTER INTO CONTRACTS, GRANTS, COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS, AND INTERAGENCY AGREEMENTS.**

(a) **AUTHORITY.**—The Director of the United States Geological Survey is authorized to enter into contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements with a host institution or consortium institution to further the research, education, training, and advisory service activities of the Department or its partners relating to impacts of climate trends and variability. This authority supplements all other laws relating to the Department and is not to be construed as limiting or repealing any existing authorities.

(b) **LEGAL INSTRUMENTS.**—The Director of the United States Geological Survey may use a contract, grant, cooperative agreement, or interagency agreement as the legal instrument reflecting a relationship between the Secretary and a host institution or consortium institution, to further the duties under section 3 without regard to—

(1) any requirements for competition;

(2) section 6101 of title 41, United States Code; or

(3) subsections (a) and (b) of section 3324 of title 31, United States Code.

(c) PARTICIPATION OF FEDERAL AGENCIES.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, any Federal agency may participate in any such cooperative agreement under this section by contributing funds through the National Center or otherwise if it is mutually agreed that the objectives of the agreement shall further the authorized programs of the contributing agency.

(d) APPROVAL REQUIRED.—In any case where a contract is let or grant made to an organization to perform services benefitting more than one Indian Tribe, the approval of each such Indian Tribe shall be a prerequisite to the letting or making of such contract or grant.

**SEC. 5. INTERAGENCY COOPERATION.**

Each department, agency, or other instrumentality of the Federal Government, that is engaged in or concerned with, or that has authority over, matters relating to natural and cultural resources, ecosystem services, or climate variability or change, including all member agencies of the United States Global Change Research Program—

(1) shall, upon a written request from the Secretary, furnish any available data or other information that the Secretary deems necessary to carry out any provision of section 3;

(2) shall cooperate with the National Center, regional centers, and duly authorized officials thereof;

(3) may make available, on a reimbursable basis or otherwise, any personnel (with their consent and without prejudice to their position and rating), service, or facility which the Chief of the National Center deems necessary to carry out any provision of section 3; and

(4) may transfer budgetary resources or otherwise enter into interagency agreements, including funding, facilities, computational resources, data, or other tangible or intangible resources, between the National Center or regional centers to aid collaborative work among Federal agencies, when approved by the Chief of the National Center and their counterpart in the other Federal agency.

**SEC. 6. COMMITTEES.**

(a) AUTHORITY TO ESTABLISH COMMITTEES.—The Chief of the National Center may establish committees or working groups and procedures to facilitate public participation in the advisory process, such as a national advisory committee for the National Center, stakeholder advisory committees and science implementation panels for the regional centers, and working groups for review of competitive.

(b) ADVISORY COMMITTEE.—

(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, and pursuant to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.), the Secretary shall establish an Advisory Committee on Climate and Natural Resource Sciences to advise the National and Regional Climate Adaptation Science Centers on the following:

(A) The contents of a national strategy identifying key climate adaptation science priorities to advance the management of natural and cultural resources in the face of climate change.

(B) The nature, extent, and quality of relations with and facilitating engagement of key partners at the regional center level.

(C) The nature and effectiveness of mechanisms to effectively deliver science information and tools, and build capacity, to aid the natural and cultural resource management community and decision-makers in adapting to a changing climate.

(D) Mechanisms that may be employed by the National Center to ensure high standards of scientific quality and integrity in its products.

(E) The integration of equity, particularly for historically underserved communities, in the operation of the National Center and regional centers.

(2) VOTING MEMBERS.—The Committee shall have not fewer than 15 voting members who shall be appointed by the Secretary. Each voting member shall be an employee of—

(A) an Indian Tribe;

(B) a Tribal organization;

(C) a Native Hawaiian organization;

(D) a State or local government;

(E) nongovernmental organization whose primary mission is conservation and related scientific and advocacy activities;

(F) an academic institution; or

(G) other sectors, environmental justice organizations, or private industry.

(3) **NON-VOTING MEMBERS.**—A Host Institution Director who is elected by the various Host Institution Directors shall serve as a non-voting member of the Committee. No individual is eligible to be a voting member of the Committee if the individual is—

- (A) a Host Institution Director;
- (B) a full-time officer or employee of the United States; or
- (C) a voting member of the Committee who is an applicant for or beneficiary of any grant or contract under this Act shall abstain from voting when there is a conflict of interest.

(4) **CHAIR.**—The Director of the United States Geological Survey shall appoint a Committee Chair from among the members of the Committee.

(5) **VICE CHAIR.**—The Committee shall select one voting member to serve as the Vice Chair, who shall act as Chair in the absence or incapacity of the Chair.

(6) **NOMINATIONS.**—Not less than once each year, the Secretary shall publish a notice in the Federal Register soliciting nominations for membership on the Committee.

(7) **TERM OF OFFICE.**—(A) The term of office of a voting member of the Committee shall be not more than 3 years.

(B) No individual may serve more than two consecutive terms as a voting member of the Committee.

(C) The Chair may extend the term of office of a voting member of the Committee by up to 1 year.

(D) Any individual appointed to a partial or full term may be reappointed for one additional full term.

(8) **DUTIES.**—The Committee shall identify and recommend priorities for ongoing research needs on the issues described in section 3(e) to inform the research priorities of the National Center.

(9) **ESTIMATED NUMBER AND FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS.**—The Committee shall meet approximately one to two times annually, and at such other times as designated by the Director of the United States Geological Survey.

(c) **COMMITTEES; WORKING GROUPS.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—At the direction of the Secretary, the Chief of the National Center may establish committees or working groups to provide input on the science priorities, implementation of science programs, review of competitive proposals, and evaluation of the National Center and the regional centers.

(2) **MEMBERS.**—The committees or working groups shall, to the extent practicable, include members from Federal and State government, universities, private sector, nongovernmental organizations, Indian Tribes, Tribal organizations, and Native Hawaiian organizations.

(3) **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.**—The Secretary may establish procedures to facilitate public participation in the advisory process, including providing advance notice of meetings, providing adequate opportunity for public input and comment, maintaining appropriate records, and making a record of the proceedings of meetings available for public inspection.

(4) **IMPLEMENTATION; AVAILABILITY OF RECORDS.**—The Secretary shall ensure that the procedures described in paragraph (3) are adopted and implemented and that the records described in paragraph (3) are accurately maintained and available for public inspection.

(5) **FACA.**—(A) The committees or working groups shall not be considered advisory committees under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.).

(B) Seeking advice and input under subparagraph (A) shall not be subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.).

**SEC. 7. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary to carry out this Act not less than—

- (1) \$84,000,000 for fiscal year 2023;
- (2) \$94,000,000 for fiscal year 2024;
- (3) \$104,000,000 for fiscal year 2025;
- (4) \$114,000,000 for fiscal year 2026; and
- (5) \$124,000,000 for fiscal year 2027.

**PURPOSE OF THE BILL**

The purpose of H.R. 6654 is to direct the Secretary of the Interior to establish a National Climate Adaptation Science Center and Regional Climate Adaptation Science Centers to respond to the effects of extreme weather events and climate trends.

## BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

The United States Geological Survey (USGS) at the U.S. Department of the Interior is a science agency that provides impartial information on earth systems and resources, including water availability, land use, natural resources, and ecosystems. Within USGS, the Climate Adaptation Science Centers (CASCs) work specifically on science to help better understand and adapt to the impacts of climate change. The CASCs are a partnership-driven effort that teams scientists from USGS and research institutions with regional natural and cultural resource managers and local communities to help adapt to a wide range of changing conditions.<sup>1</sup>

The CASCs have been funded through annual appropriations from Congress since 2008 but are not permanently authorized in statute. From FY18 to FY21, President Trump’s budget requests attempted to cut funding for the CASCs significantly, but Congress maintained stable funding.<sup>2</sup> In FY 2022, the CASCs received \$54 million.

The CASC network consists of one National Center at USGS headquarters in Reston, VA, and nine Regional Centers across the country. The Regional Centers are each headquartered at a university within their specified region and work on regional issues with local stakeholders. The nine regions are Alaska, Pacific Islands, Northwest, Southwest, North Central, South Central, Midwest, Northeast, and Southeast.<sup>3</sup>

Each Regional Center is situated at a “host institution,” or local university, with multiple “consortium institution” members: universities, Indian tribes, tribal colleges or universities, or other research institutions or nongovernmental organizations within the region. Each Regional Center’s current host and consortium institutions are listed on a USGS website.<sup>4</sup>

The CASC network partners with various stakeholders, including resource managers within federal and state agencies, tribes, other Indigenous communities, and nongovernmental organizations. The CASCs work directly with their partners to identify priority issues related to climate change, develop research plans, and produce useful science products.

Each year, the National Center distributes a portion of the total appropriations for the CASC program to each Regional Center. The Regional Centers then identify projects to work on according to pre-established priorities and regional needs and publish all science for public use.

The CASC network develops science directly applicable to climate adaptation decisions, actions, and plans by emphasizing engagement with their partners. These projects are designed to address the science-based specific needs of the community with whom they partner.

The National and Regional CASCs work on a broad range of projects related to climate adaptation. For example, the North Cen-

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<sup>1</sup> See generally *Climate Adaptation Science Centers*, USGS, <https://www.usgs.gov/programs/climate-adaptation-science-centers> (last visited Dec. 4, 2022).

<sup>2</sup> See various at *Budget Archives*, USGS OFFICE OF BUD., PLANNING & INTEGRATION, <https://www.usgs.gov/bpi/budget-archives>.

<sup>3</sup> *Learn About the Regional CASCs*, USGS, <https://www.usgs.gov/programs/climate-adaptation-science-centers/learn-about-regional-cases> (last visited Dec. 5, 2022).

<sup>4</sup> *CASC Network and Region Maps*, USGS, <https://www.usgs.gov/programs/climate-adaptation-science-centers/casc-network-and-region-maps> (last visited Dec. 5, 2022).



tral CASC partnered with the Wildlife Conservation Society and the Wyoming Game and Fish Department on a workshop incorporating climate data into the 2020 Wyoming Statewide Habitat Plan. The workshop led to revisions in the Habitat Plan that specifically responded to the impact of climate change.<sup>5</sup>

In Mississippi, in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, Congress directed the Mobile District U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to repair barrier islands as the first line of defense against future storms. The Southeast CASC partnered with the Army Corps and other stakeholders early in the planning process to coordinate stakeholder objectives. The Army Corps needed to consult with the National Marine Fisheries Service about endangered Gulf sturgeon, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service about construction-displaced sea turtles and birds, and the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management about equipment for sand dredging, as well as other local and regional partners. The many federal and state agencies often have conflicting needs, goals, and jurisdictions, creating challenges for management and coordination. The Southeast CASC facilitated stakeholder meetings to preemptively determine the main project objectives, potential problems that could arise during construction, and the consequences and tradeoffs of different actions, leading to effective collaboration among partners.<sup>6</sup>

In Juneau, Alaska, 100-year glacial floods have occurred every year for the last ten years. When the first such recent flood occurred in 2011, flood models were entirely based on rainfall rather than the effect of climate change on nearby glaciers. The Alaska CASC partnered with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the National Weather Service, the Municipality of Anchorage, and the City and Borough of Juneau, to create new models to predict glacial flooding so communities and scientists could better understand and prepare for potential catastrophic events.<sup>7</sup>

The CASC network recognizes that Native Americans, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and other Indigenous peoples often face disproportionate impacts from climate change. The CASCs prioritize tribal nations, tribal organizations, and other Indigenous groups as partners in their work. Each Regional CASC hosts a Tribal Resilience Liaison, which connects tribal nations, tribal nation agencies, tribal organizations, and other Indigenous communities to information, data, resources, and expertise that facilitate culturally appropriate research and planning. CASC Tribal Liaisons have worked with over 100 tribal nations on adaptation plans and vulnerability assessments and have supported nearly 200 tribal climate camps, summits, trainings, workshops, retreats, and presentations.

<sup>5</sup>*Project Spotlight: North Central CASC Aids Resource Agency in Adopting Climate-Informed Management Practices*, USGS (Mar. 10, 2021), <https://www.usgs.gov/news/project-spotlight-north-central-casc-aids-resource-agency-adopting-climate-informed-management>.

<sup>6</sup>*Project Spotlight: Southeast CASC Project Contributes to Successful Barrier Island Restoration*, USGS (May 18, 2021), <https://www.usgs.gov/news/project-spotlight-southeast-casc-project-contributes-successful-barrier-island-restoration>.

<sup>7</sup>*Project Spotlight: Alaska CASC Helps Juneau Community Understand Mysterious Glacial Outburst Floods*, USGS (October 28, 2021), <https://www.usgs.gov/programs/climate-adaptation-science-centers-program/news/project-spotlight-alaska-casc-helps-juneau>; see also Christian Kienholz, Jamie Pierce, Eran Hood et al., *Deglacierization of a Marginal Basin and Implications for Outburst Floods, Mendenhall Glacier, Alaska*, 8 *FRONTIERS IN EARTH SCI.* art. 137 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.3389/feart.2020.00137>.

The final component of the CASCs' work is education and training. The CASC network has supported over 200 students and early-career scientists and professionals through fellowship and training programs. According to USGS, "Participants conduct groundbreaking research on climate change impacts and adaptation, develop skills in science communication and partner engagement, and build networks of peers and mentors to support future career development."<sup>8</sup>

H.R. 6654 would permanently authorize the Climate Adaptation Science Center program at the USGS, authorize appropriations for FY23–FY27, and make several technical changes to the program.

The bill codifies that there should be nine Regional Centers. It also codifies a pathway to make changes to consortium institutions members in the middle of a five-year agreement rather than waiting until the end of an agreement cycle. Rather than having open competition for a host institution every five years, the bill introduces performance-based evaluations for hosts. After one final round of competition, hosts can remain unless they fall below USGS' standards. If they fall below standard, then USGS may recommend open competition.

The bill codifies the tools the CASCs can use to serve stakeholders and land managers, including training and education for early career professionals. Under the Trump administration, the CASCs were not allowed to do "training" or "education" and were limited to "workforce development." This specifically limited work the CASCs could do with tribal partners, as training is a key to bringing tribal partners up to speed on data products and other science.

The bill includes CASC-specific language for the USGS Office of Acquisition and Grants. The bill establishes additional options for how the host institutions can be funded and supported. Previously, CASC activities were authorized through the Organic Act of 1879, which authorized the United States Geological Survey, but did not include language for education, training, or mentoring, occasionally leading to some activities being denied.

The legislation reinstates a Federal Advisory Committee that was dismantled during the Trump Administration. The Federal Advisory Committee guides where the CASCs should focus their efforts and what scientific questions and emerging issues they should prioritize. The Federal Advisory Committees are also a formalized way for the CASCs to check in with stakeholders, including other federal agencies and tribes, and for stakeholders to check in with each other.

#### COMMITTEE ACTION

H.R. 6654 was introduced on February 9, 2022, by Representative Raúl M. Grijalva (D–AZ). The bill was referred solely to the Committee on Natural Resources, and within the Committee to the Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources and the Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples of the United States. On February 17, 2022, the Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources held a hearing on the bill. On July 13, 2022, the Natural

<sup>8</sup> *Education*, USGS <https://www.usgs.gov/programs/climate-adaptation-science-centers/science/education> (last visited Dec. 5, 2022).

Resources Committee met to consider the bill. The Subcommittees were discharged by unanimous consent. Chair Grijalva offered an amendment in the nature of a substitute. Rep. Blake D. Moore (R-UT) offered an amendment designated Moore #2 to the amendment in the nature of a substitute. The amendment was not agreed to by a roll call vote of 17 yeas and 22 nays, as follows:

Date: July 13, 2022

**COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES  
117<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS — ROLL CALL**

Bill / Motion: H.R. 6654

Amendment: Rep. Moore #2 amendment to the ANS

Disposition: Was not agreed to by a roll call vote of 17 yeas and 22 nays.

	DEM. MEMBERS (26)	YEAS	NAYS	PRESENT
1	Ms. Brownley, CA		X	
2	Mr. Case, HI		X	
3	Mr. Cohen, TN			
4	Mr. Costa, CA		X	
5	Ms. DeGette, CO		X	
6	Mrs. Dingell, MI		X	
7	Mr. Gallego, AZ		X	
8	Mr. Garcia, IL		X	
9	Mr. Grijalva, AZ (Chair)		X	
10	Mr. Huffman, CA		X	
11	Ms. Leger Fernández, NM		X	
12	Mr. Levin, CA		X	
13	Mr. Lowenthal, CA		X	
14	Ms. McCollum, MN		X	
15	Mr. McEachin, VA		X	
16	Mrs. Napolitano, CA		X	
17	Mr. Neguse, CO		X	
18	Ms. Porter, CA			
19	Mr. Sablan, MP		X	
20	Mr. San Nicolas, GU			
21	Mr. Soto, FL		X	
22	Ms. Stansbury, NM		X	
23	Ms. Tlaib, MI		X	
24	Mr. Tonko, NY		X	
25	Ms. Trahan, MA		X	
26	Ms. Velázquez, NY			
	<b>REP. MEMBERS (21)</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>P</b>
1	Mr. Bentz, OR	X		
2	Mrs. Boebert, CO			
3	Mr. Carl, AL	X		
4	Ms. Conway, CA	X		
5	Mr. Fulcher, ID	X		
6	Mr. Gohmert, TX	X		
7	Miss González-Colón, PR	X		
8	Mr. Graves, LA	X		
9	Ms. Herrell, NM	X		
10	Mr. Hice, GA			
11	Mr. Lamborn, CO	X		
12	Mr. McClintock, CA	X		
13	Mr. Moore, UT	X		
14	Mr. Oberholte, CA			
15	Mrs. Radewagen, AS			
16	Mr. Rosendale, MT	X		
17	Mr. Stauber, MN	X		
18	Mr. Tiffany, WI	X		
19	Mr. Webster, FL	X		
20	Mr. Westerman, AR (RM)	X		
21	Mr. Wittman, VA	X		
	<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>22</b>	
	Total: 47 / Quorum: 16 / Report: 24	<b>YEAS</b>	<b>NAYS</b>	<b>PRESENT</b>

Rep. Moore offered an amendment designated Moore #3 to the amendment in the nature of a substitute. The amendment was not agreed to by a roll call vote of 17 yeas and 21 nays, as follows:

Date: July 13, 2022

**COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES  
117<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS — ROLL CALL**

Bill / Motion: H.R. 6654

Amendment: Rep. Moore amendment #3 to the ANS

Disposition: Was not agreed to by a roll call vote of 17 yeas and 21 nays.

	DEM. MEMBERS (26)	YEAS	NAYS	PRESENT
1	Ms. Brownley, CA		X	
2	Mr. Case, HI		X	
3	Mr. Cohen, TN			
4	Mr. Costa, CA			
5	Ms. DeGette, CO		X	
6	Mrs. Dingell, MI		X	
7	Mr. Gallego, AZ		X	
8	Mr. Garcia, IL		X	
9	Mr. Grijalva, AZ (Chair)		X	
10	Mr. Huffman, CA		X	
11	Ms. Leger Fernández, NM		X	
12	Mr. Levin, CA		X	
13	Mr. Lowenthal, CA		X	
14	Ms. McCollum, MN		X	
15	Mr. McEachin, VA		X	
16	Mrs. Napolitano, CA		X	
17	Mr. Neguse, CO		X	
18	Ms. Porter, CA			
19	Mr. Sablan, MP		X	
20	Mr. San Nicolas, GU			
21	Mr. Soto, FL		X	
22	Ms. Stansbury, NM		X	
23	Ms. Tlaib, MI		X	
24	Mr. Tonko, NY		X	
25	Ms. Trahan, MA		X	
26	Ms. Velázquez, NY			
	<b>REP. MEMBERS (21)</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>P</b>
1	Mr. Bentz, OR	X		
2	Mrs. Boebert, CO			
3	Mr. Carl, AL	X		
4	Ms. Conway, CA	X		
5	Mr. Fulcher, ID	X		
6	Mr. Gohmert, TX	X		
7	Miss González-Colón, PR	X		
8	Mr. Graves, LA	X		
9	Ms. Herrell, NM	X		
10	Mr. Hice, GA			
11	Mr. Lamborn, CO	X		
12	Mr. McClintock, CA	X		
13	Mr. Moore, UT	X		
14	Mr. Oberholte, CA			
15	Mrs. Radewagen, AS			
16	Mr. Rosendale, MT	X		
17	Mr. Stauber, MN	X		
18	Mr. Tiffany, WI	X		
19	Mr. Webster, FL	X		
20	Mr. Westerman, AR (RM)	X		
21	Mr. Wittman, VA	X		
	<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>21</b>	
	Total: 47 / Quorum: 16 / Report: 24	<b>YEAS</b>	<b>NAYS</b>	<b>PRESENT</b>

Ranking Member Westerman offered an amendment designated Westerman #1 to the amendment in the nature of a substitute. The amendment was not agreed to by voice vote. Rep. Boebert offered an amendment designated Boebert #338 to the amendment in the nature of a substitute. The amendment was not agreed to by a roll call vote of 16 yeas and 20 nays, as follows:

Date: July 13, 2022

**COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES  
117<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS — ROLL CALL**

Bill / Motion: H.R. 6654

Amendment: Rep. Boebert amendment #338 to the ANS

Disposition: Was not agreed to by a roll call vote of 16 yeas and 20 nays.

	DEM. MEMBERS (26)	YEAS	NAYS	PRESENT
1	Ms. Brownley, CA		X	
2	Mr. Case, HI		X	
3	Mr. Cohen, TN			
4	Mr. Costa, CA			
5	Ms. DeGette, CO		X	
6	Mrs. Dingell, MI		X	
7	Mr. Gallego, AZ		X	
8	Mr. Garcia, IL		X	
9	Mr. Grijalva, AZ (Chair)		X	
10	Mr. Huffman, CA		X	
11	Ms. Leger Fernández, NM		X	
12	Mr. Levin, CA		X	
13	Mr. Lowenthal, CA		X	
14	Ms. McCollum, MN		X	
15	Mr. McEachin, VA		X	
16	Mrs. Napolitano, CA		X	
17	Mr. Neguse, CO		X	
18	Ms. Porter, CA			
19	Mr. Sablan, MP		X	
20	Mr. San Nicolas, GU			
21	Mr. Soto, FL		X	
22	Ms. Stansbury, NM		X	
23	Ms. Tlaib, MI			
24	Mr. Tonko, NY		X	
25	Ms. Trahan, MA		X	
26	Ms. Velázquez, NY			
	<b>REP. MEMBERS (21)</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>P</b>
1	Mr. Bentz, OR	X		
2	Mrs. Boebert, CO			
3	Mr. Carl, AL	X		
4	Ms. Conway, CA	X		
5	Mr. Fulcher, ID	X		
6	Mr. Gohmert, TX	X		
7	Miss González-Colón, PR	X		
8	Mr. Graves, LA	X		
9	Ms. Herrell, NM	X		
10	Mr. Hice, GA			
11	Mr. Lamborn, CO			
12	Mr. McClintock, CA	X		
13	Mr. Moore, UT	X		
14	Mr. Oberholte, CA			
15	Mrs. Radewagen, AS			
16	Mr. Rosendale, MT	X		
17	Mr. Stauber, MN	X		
18	Mr. Tiffany, WI	X		
19	Mr. Webster, FL	X		
20	Mr. Westerman, AR (RM)	X		
21	Mr. Wittman, VA	X		
	<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>20</b>	
	Total: 47 / Quorum: 16 / Report: 24	<b>YEAS</b>	<b>NAYS</b>	<b>PRESENT</b>



Rep. Tom Tiffany (R-WI) offered an amendment designated Tiffany #4 to the amendment in the nature of a substitute. The amendment was not agreed to by a roll call vote of 17 yeas and 21 nays, as follows:

Date: July 13, 2022

**COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES  
117<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS — ROLL CALL**

Bill / Motion: H.R. 6654

Amendment: Rep. Tiffany amendment #4 to the ANS

Disposition: Was not agreed to by a roll call vote of 17 yeas and 21 nays.

	DEM. MEMBERS (26)	YEAS	NAYS	PRESENT
1	Ms. Brownley, CA		X	
2	Mr. Case, HI		X	
3	Mr. Cohen, TN			
4	Mr. Costa, CA			
5	Ms. DeGette, CO		X	
6	Mrs. Dingell, MI		X	
7	Mr. Gallego, AZ		X	
8	Mr. Garcia, IL		X	
9	Mr. Grijalva, AZ (Chair)		X	
10	Mr. Huffman, CA		X	
11	Ms. Leger Fernández, NM		X	
12	Mr. Levin, CA		X	
13	Mr. Lowenthal, CA		X	
14	Ms. McCollum, MN		X	
15	Mr. McEachin, VA		X	
16	Mrs. Napolitano, CA		X	
17	Mr. Neguse, CO		X	
18	Ms. Porter, CA			
19	Mr. Sabian, MP		X	
20	Mr. San Nicolas, GU			
21	Mr. Soto, FL		X	
22	Ms. Stansbury, NM		X	
23	Ms. Tlaib, MI		X	
24	Mr. Tonko, NY		X	
25	Ms. Trahan, MA		X	
26	Ms. Velázquez, NY			
	<b>REP. MEMBERS (21)</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>P</b>
1	Mr. Bentz, OR	X		
2	Mrs. Boebert, CO	X		
3	Mr. Carl, AL	X		
4	Ms. Conway, CA	X		
5	Mr. Fulcher, ID	X		
6	Mr. Gohmert, TX	X		
7	Miss González-Colón, PR	X		
8	Mr. Graves, LA			
9	Ms. Herrell, NM	X		
10	Mr. Hice, GA			
11	Mr. Lamborn, CO	X		
12	Mr. McClintock, CA	X		
13	Mr. Moore, UT	X		
14	Mr. Oberholte, CA			
15	Mrs. Radewagen, AS			
16	Mr. Rosendale, MT	X		
17	Mr. Stauber, MN	X		
18	Mr. Tiffany, WI	X		
19	Mr. Webster, FL	X		
20	Mr. Westerman, AR (RM)	X		
21	Mr. Wittman, VA	X		
	<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>21</b>	
	Total: 47 / Quorum: 16 / Report: 24	<b>YEAS</b>	<b>NAYS</b>	<b>PRESENT</b>

The amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to by voice vote. The bill, as amended, was adopted and ordered favorably reported to the House of Representatives by a roll call vote of 22 yeas and 18 nays, as follows:

Date: July 13, 2022

**COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES**  
**117<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS — ROLL CALL**

Bill / Motion: H.R. 6654

Amendment:

Disposition: Final Passage: H.R. 6654, as amended, was ordered favorably reported to the House of Representatives by a roll call vote 22 yeas and 18 nays.

	DEM. MEMBERS (26)	YEAS	NAYS	PRESENT
1	Ms. Brownley, CA	X		
2	Mr. Case, HI	X		
3	Mr. Cohen, TN			
4	Mr. Costa, CA	X		
5	Ms. DeGette, CO	X		
6	Mrs. Dingell, MI	X		
7	Mr. Gallego, AZ	X		
8	Mr. García, IL	X		
9	Mr. Grjalva, AZ (Chair)	X		
10	Mr. Huffman, CA	X		
11	Ms. Leger-Fernández, NM	X		
12	Mr. Levin, CA	X		
13	Mr. Lowenthal, CA	X		
14	Ms. McCollum, MN	X		
15	Mr. McEachin, VA	X		
16	Mrs. Napolitano, CA	X		
17	Mr. Neguse, CO	X		
18	Ms. Porter, CA			
19	Mr. Sablan, MP	X		
20	Mr. San Nicolas, GU			
21	Mr. Soto, FL	X		
22	Ms. Stansbury, NM	X		
23	Ms. Tlaib, MI	X		
24	Mr. Tonko, NY	X		
25	Ms. Trahan, MA	X		
26	Ms. Velázquez, NY			
	<b>REP. MEMBERS (21)</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>P</b>
1	Mr. Bentz, OR		X	
2	Mrs. Boebert, CO		X	
3	Mr. Carl, AL		X	
4	Ms. Conway, CA		X	
5	Mr. Fulcher, ID		X	
6	Mr. Gohmert, TX		X	
7	Miss González-Colón, PR		X	
8	Mr. Graves, LA		X	
9	Ms. Herrell, NM		X	
10	Mr. Hice, GA			
11	Mr. Lamborn, CO		X	
12	Mr. McClintock, CA		X	
13	Mr. Moore, UT		X	
14	Mr. Obernoite, CA			
15	Mrs. Radewagen, AS			
16	Mr. Rosendale, MT		X	
17	Mr. Stauber, MN		X	
18	Mr. Tiffany, WI		X	
19	Mr. Webster, FL		X	
20	Mr. Westerman, AR (RM)		X	
	Mr. Wittman, VA		X	
	<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>18</b>	
	Total: 47 / Quorum: 16 / Report: 24	<b>YEAS</b>	<b>NAYS</b>	<b>PRESENT</b>

## HEARINGS

For the purposes of clause 3(c)(6) of House rule XIII, the following hearing was used to develop or consider this measure: hearing by the Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources held on February 17, 2022.

## SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

*Section 1. Short title**Section 2. Definitions*

This section provides definitions for key terms.

*Section 3. Establishment and duties*

This section establishes the framework and duties of the National and Regional Climate Adaptation Science Centers.

The Chief of the National Center will be a United States Geological Survey (USGS) employee. Each Regional Center will have a USGS employee Federal Director and a Host Institution Director who work collaboratively.

In collaboration with other Federal agencies, states, tribes, and other partner organizations, the National Center will serve as the national office for the Regional Centers, providing leadership, facilitating coordination, and conducting research on cross-regional climate science priorities.

Subject to the availability of appropriations, the National Center will provide a stable base of funding for no fewer than nine Regional Centers. The Regional Centers will be hosted at a university or consortium of universities within the designated region. Existing Regional Centers will have to compete for their status one final time upon the conclusion of its five-year term to ensure that the host institutions and associated consortium institutions update their proposals recognizing long-term commitments. Afterward, a Regional Center will not have to compete for its status but will be subject to review on five-year terms. The Chief of the National Center will establish guidelines for merit reviews of the Regional Centers and host institutions. The Chief of the National Center can add or remove a consortium member at any time to address regional and national priorities.

The duties of the Regional Centers are to collaborate with local and regional stakeholders, including federal and state agencies, tribes, and other partner organizations within the region, to develop research, education, training, and advisory services regarding the impacts of climate change on natural and cultural resource management.

*Section 4. General authority to enter into contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, and interagency agreements*

This section grants general authority for USGS to enter into contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, and interagency agreements with a host institution or consortium institution. Any federal agency may participate in any cooperative agreement by contributing funds through the National Center.

*Section 5. Interagency cooperation*

This section allows federal departments or agencies with authority over issues relating to natural resources, cultural resources, or climate change to work with the CASCs. They can make personnel, services, facilities, and data available to the CASCs, and may transfer funding, facilities, or other resources to the CASCs to aid collaborative work.

*Section 6. Committees*

This section establishes procedures for advisory committees and working groups, as well as for facilitating public participation in the advisory process. This section sets up an Advisory Committee on Climate and Natural Resources that can include employees of tribes, tribal organizations, Native Hawaiian organizations, state and local government, host institutions, nongovernmental organizations, academic institutions, and organizations in the private sector.

The Secretary of the Interior may establish procedures to facilitate public participation in the advisory process, which informs science priorities.

*Section 7. Authorization of appropriations*

This section authorizes appropriations for FY 2023–FY 2027 at the following levels.

- \$84,000,000 for fiscal year 2023;
- \$94,000,000 for fiscal year 2024;
- \$104,000,000 for fiscal year 2025;
- \$114,000,000 for fiscal year 2026; and
- \$124,000,000 for fiscal year 2027.

COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Regarding clause 2(b)(1) of rule X and clause 3(c)(1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee on Natural Resources’ oversight findings and recommendations are reflected in the body of this report.

COMPLIANCE WITH HOUSE RULE XIII AND CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET ACT

1. *Cost of Legislation and the Congressional Budget Act.* With respect to the requirements of clause 3(c)(2) and (3) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives and sections 308(a) and 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, as well as clause 3(d) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee has received the following estimate for the bill from the Director of the Congressional Budget Office:

U.S. CONGRESS,  
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,  
*Washington, DC, November 14, 2022.*

Hon. RAÚL M. GRIJALVA,  
*Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources,  
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has prepared the enclosed cost estimate for H.R. 6654, the CASC Act.

If you wish further details on this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them. The CBO staff contact is Madeleine Fox.

Sincerely,

PHILLIP L. SWAGEL,  
*Director.*

Enclosure.

<b>H.R. 6654, CASC Act</b>			
As ordered reported by the House Committee on Natural Resources on July 13, 2022			
By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars	2023	2023-2027	2023-2032
Direct Spending (Outlays)	0	0	0
Revenues	0	0	0
Increase or Decrease (-) in the Deficit	0	0	0
<b>Spending Subject to Appropriation (Outlays)</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>471</b>	<b>509</b>
Statutory pay-as-you-go procedures apply?	No	<b>Mandate Effects</b>	
Increases on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2033?	No	Contains intergovernmental mandate?	No
		Contains private-sector mandate?	No

H.R. 6654 would authorize National and Regional Climate Adaptation Science Centers, which are maintained by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) within the Department of the Interior. The centers provide expertise on extreme weather and climate trends to federal and nonfederal groups that manage natural and cultural resources. The bill also would require the department to establish a committee to advise the centers on research priorities. The centers received \$41 million in funding for fiscal year 2022.

H.R. 6654 would authorize the appropriation of \$84 million for fiscal year 2023 for the centers’ operations. That amount would increase by \$10 million annually through 2027. Using historical spending patterns for USGS programs, CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 6654 would cost \$471 million over the 2023–2027 period and \$509 million over the 2023–2032 period, assuming appropriation of the authorized amounts.

The costs of the legislation, detailed in Table 1, fall within budget function 300 (natural resources).

TABLE 1.—ESTIMATED INCREASES IN SPENDING SUBJECT TO APPROPRIATION UNDER H.R. 6654

	By fiscal years, millions of dollars—					
	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2023–2027
Authorization .....	84	94	104	114	124	520
Estimated Outlays .....	60	86	98	109	118	471

This program received an appropriation of \$41 million in 2022 and that appropriation has been extended under the continuing resolution, Public Law 117–180. The amount in 2023 shows what would be authorized in the bill and is not adjusted for the amounts in the continuing resolution.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Madeleine Fox. The estimate was reviewed by H. Samuel Papenfuss, Deputy Director of Budget Analysis.

2. *General Performance Goals and Objectives.* As required by clause 3(c)(4) of rule XIII, the general performance goals and objectives of this bill are to direct the Secretary of the Interior to establish a National Climate Adaptation Science Center and Regional Climate Adaptation Science Centers to respond to the effects of extreme weather events and climate trends.

#### EARMARK STATEMENT

This bill does not contain any Congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined under clause 9(e), 9(f), and 9(g) of rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives.

#### UNFUNDED MANDATES REFORM ACT STATEMENT

According to CBO, this bill contains no unfunded mandates as defined by the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act.

#### FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACT STATEMENT

This bill would authorize the CASCs, establish an Advisory Committee on Climate and Natural Resource Sciences, and authorize for the Chief of the National Center and the Federal Directors of the regional centers to establish additional advisory committees as appropriate. In reporting the bill favorably to the House of Representatives, the Committee on Natural Resources finds that these functions would be better performed by these advisory committees than by one or more agencies or by some another existing advisory committee.

#### EXISTING PROGRAMS

This bill does not establish or reauthorize a program of the federal government known to be duplicative of another program. Such program was not included in any report from the Government Accountability Office to Congress pursuant to section 21 of Public Law 111–139. The most recent Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance published pursuant to 31 U.S.C. § 6104 does not identify other programs as related to the National and Regional Climate Adaptation Science Centers (CFDA No. 15.820) authorized by this bill.

#### APPLICABILITY TO LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

The Committee finds that the legislation does not relate to the terms and conditions of employment or access to public services or accommodations within the meaning of section 102(b)(3) of the Congressional Accountability Act.

#### PREEMPTION OF STATE, LOCAL, OR TRIBAL LAW

Any preemptive effect of this bill over state, local, or tribal law is intended to be consistent with the bill's purposes and text and the Supremacy Clause of Article VI of the U.S. Constitution.

#### CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

If enacted, this bill would make no changes to existing law.



## DISSENTING VIEWS

H.R. 6654 (Grijalva) would authorize the Climate Adaptation Science Centers (CASC) program at the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) at a total of \$605 million over five years.

The CASC program is intended to assist research efforts to support land management planning for environmental and climate-related issues. The program consists of one national center and nine regional centers; the regions are Alaska, Midwest, North Central, Northeast, Northwest, Pacific Islands, South Central, Southeast, and Southwest.

Currently, Congress appropriates funding to the National CASC on an annual basis. A portion of that funding stays at the National CASC, with the remainder divided amongst the nine regions. From there, research is funded through two mechanisms. First, approximately \$4.5 million is provided to each “host university” (universities where regional CASCs are housed) over a five-year period for cooperative agreements between the host university and USGS. This funding is for the physical location of the regional CASC and salaries for graduate and post-doctorate students to assist in research efforts. The five-year science agenda under these cooperative agreements is largely formed by a stakeholder outreach process.

The vast majority of research is performed through a second funding mechanism, in which regional CASCs each select one annual research project to fund. Once funding is distributed to the regions from the National CASC, the director of each region releases a call for proposals. Ultimately, the director of each regional CASC determines which project will be researched and funded, after receiving input from advisory committees. The directors of the regional CASCs have significant discretion over this project selection process, and there is no standardization of methodology for project prioritization. This means it is difficult for Congress to determine if research topics are properly prioritized in accordance with the stated goal of the program, self-described as, “to deliver science to help fish, wildlife, water, land, and people adapt to a changing climate.”

For instance, in January 2022, the National CASC published a study on the projected impacts of climate change on ecosystems in Madagascar. Studies like this one demonstrate a departure from the original intent of the program, which was to research environment and climate-related issues to help land managers in regional and local decision-making. Unfortunately, the program as authorized by this bill has shifted away from the original goal of actionable, localized science.

Under H.R. 6645, the CASC program would be authorized at a total of \$605 million over five years. This would nearly triple the funding of the program compared to the fiscal year (FY) 2021 appropriated level of \$41.3 million—without controls for overhead

costs. Historically, USGS research facilities have had overhead rates varying quite widely, from about 15 percent to more than 40 percent; university overhead costs can be even higher. USGS has cited growing demand for climate adaptation data, as well as questions from land managers on how to apply it, as the rationale for the major program increases, but it remains extremely unclear exactly how this additional funding will be utilized. The lack of mission clarity and absence of cost controls poses significant concerns about maintaining accountability for taxpayer dollars.

Finally, there appears to be significant overlap between CASC and other programs. The National Science Foundation and other USGS programs, such as the Cooperative Research Units (CRUs), are already authorized and funded to analyze very similar research topics. It is difficult to tell how the CASC program is distinct from existing research efforts, or why it needs its own funding to compete with longstanding programs.

This proposed major increase in funding with a lack of overhead limitations presents concerns regarding accountability to the taxpayers and oversight of the program. Furthermore, the expansion and vagueness of eligible research areas, including the broad discretion given regional CASC directors in selecting research projects, also generates concerns regarding overlap with existing federal programs, as well as a departure from the original intent of the CASC program.

For these reasons, I oppose H.R. 6654.

BRUCE WESTERMAN.

