

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 6477

To require the Secretary of the Treasury and the Secretary of the Interior to carry out a study with respect to wildlife trafficking financing and proceeds, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 25, 2022

Ms. DEAN introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on Financial Services, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To require the Secretary of the Treasury and the Secretary of the Interior to carry out a study with respect to wildlife trafficking financing and proceeds, 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 “Combating Wildlife
5 Trafficking Financing and Proceeds Study Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

1 (1) The 2017 report by the think tank, Global
2 Financial Integrity, entitled “Transnational Crime
3 and the Developing World”, determined that the an-
4 nual global retail value of illegal wildlife trade is be-
5 tween \$5 billion to \$23 billion, and when losses to
6 ecosystem services are considered, the World Bank
7 estimates the cost of environmental crime is between
8 \$1 trillion and \$2 trillion, annually.

9 (2) Wildlife traffickers do not prefer particular
10 species or commodities, but instead, according to the
11 non-governmental organization, United for Wildlife,
12 wildlife traffickers focus on the demand, availability,
13 profit potential, and relatively low risk associated
14 with acquiring, trading, and distributing wildlife
15 globally.

16 (3) The trafficking of wildlife affects human
17 health because of undetected spread of zoonotic dis-
18 eases, scarcity in food resources, and the environ-
19 mental results of degraded ecosystems.

20 (4) Also, the trafficking of illicit wildlife such as
21 pangolins from Africa, macaws from Peru, turtles
22 from the United States, and rosewood species smug-
23 gled globally threatens our national security at home
24 and American interests abroad because rogue orga-
25 nizations, including transnational criminal organiza-

1 tions, use the proceeds to fund illegal and violent
2 acts throughout the world, fueling corruption and
3 benefiting from corrupt government officials, weak-
4 ening the rule of law, and distorting commercial
5 markets.

6 (5) Many of these supply chains are affected by
7 Chinese activity, from the criminal organizations in-
8 volved in the initial poaching of targeted commod-
9 ities to the demand for goods produced from endan-
10 gered plants and animals.

11 (6) The Organized Crime Drug Enforcement
12 Task Forces conducted an investigation known as
13 “Operation Apex” which identified extensive overlaps
14 among drug trafficking organizations, professional
15 money launderers, and wildlife trafficking syn-
16 dicates.

17 (7) A study conducted by Federal entities that
18 examined wildlife trafficking networks determined
19 that—

20 (A) more than two-thirds of persons traf-
21 ficking wildlife also trafficked narcotics;

22 (B) 10 percent of persons trafficking wild-
23 life were doing so to finance terrorism; and

1 (C) a small percentage of persons traf-
2 ficking wildlife were doing so to finance the pro-
3 liferation of nuclear materials.

4 (8) Because wildlife trafficking is executed as
5 part of a commodity-agnostic global enterprise, the
6 United States and allies of the United States should
7 focus efforts to reduce wildlife trafficking on cur-
8 tailing the expansive networks that traffic wildlife
9 and other goods and on bringing enforcement ac-
10 tions against persons who launder the proceeds of
11 those persons who traffic wildlife rather than pursue
12 specific nations, groups, or commodities.

13 (9) In the past decade, the illicit wildlife trade
14 has moved online, mainly to social media platforms,
15 creating jurisdictional and technical challenges for
16 law enforcement.

17 **SEC. 3. STUDY.**

18 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Treasury
19 and the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the U.S.
20 Fish and Wildlife Service, shall jointly, not later than 2
21 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, conduct
22 a study with respect to wildlife trafficking financing and
23 proceeds and submit a report on such study to—

1 (1) the Committees on Financial Services and
2 Natural Resources of the House of Representatives;
3 and

4 (2) the Committees on Banking, Housing, and
5 Urban Affairs and Energy and Natural Resources of
6 the Senate.

7 (b) CONSULTATION.—In conducting the study re-
8 quired under subsection (a), the Secretary of the Treasury
9 and the Secretary of the Interior shall consult with such
10 other Federal officials as the Secretaries determine appro-
11 priate, including the Secretary of State, the Director of
12 National Intelligence, the Director of Homeland Security
13 Investigations, the Attorney General, and the Secretary of
14 Defense.

15 (c) INPUT.—In conducting the study required under
16 subsection (a), the Secretary of the Treasury and the Sec-
17 retary of the Interior shall solicit and incorporate, where
18 possible and as determined appropriate by the Secretaries,
19 input from—

20 (1) domestic, foreign, and multilateral law en-
21 forcement organizations,

22 (2) the intelligence community;

23 (3) wildlife advocates;

24 (4) experts in transnational organized crime,
25 cyber-crime, and illicit finance; and

1 (5) nongovernmental organizations, academia,
2 foundations, and other public and private entities.

3 (d) CONTENTS OF REPORT.—The report required
4 under subsection (a) shall include—

5 (1) an overview of the criminal and complicit
6 actors, including individuals, organizations, corrupt
7 networks, and nations, that participate in wildlife
8 trafficking from source to market, both proactively
9 and permissively.

10 (2) an overview of the types of wildlife traf-
11 ficked, for what purposes, and from where;

12 (3) an overview of the roles of professional
13 money launderers, corporate and trust formation
14 agents, kleptocrats, and other supply chain and fi-
15 nancial facilitators with respect to wildlife traf-
16 ficking;

17 (4) a discussion, based on a consideration of
18 relevant prior studies and investigations, of the con-
19 vergence of wildlife trafficking with other types of
20 trafficking, including trafficking in persons, timber
21 trafficking, and narcotics trafficking, including
22 shared supply chains and financial facilitators;

23 (5) an overview of the national security implica-
24 tions associated with wildlife trafficking and the fi-

1 financing and proceeds of wildlife trafficking, includ-
2 ing—

3 (A) potential threats to security, including
4 corruption and State instability resulting from
5 wildlife trafficking; and

6 (B) potential threats to public health, in-
7 cluding global pandemic and ecosystem collapse;

8 (6) an examination of how anti-corruption ac-
9 tivities might be leveraged with respect to mitigating
10 the ways in which corrupt officials and politically ex-
11 posed persons enable and engage in wildlife traf-
12 ficking financing and proceeds;

13 (7) an examination of payments methods used
14 to facilitate the trafficking of wildlife, including its
15 financing and proceeds;

16 (8) an examination of how online platforms are
17 used to facilitate trafficking and trafficking-related
18 payments that—

19 (A) describes the extent to which illicit
20 wildlife trade occurs online, including through
21 social media platforms, ecommerce sites, and
22 encrypted messaging and other surface web
23 platforms;

24 (B) identifies payments- and proceeds-re-
25 lated reasons that different online platforms

1 may be chosen by persons trafficking in wildlife;
2 and

3 (C) identifies online platforms that are
4 used most for transactions and payments in-
5 volving trafficking in wildlife;

6 (9) an examination of private-sector best prac-
7 tices for combating wildlife trafficking financing and
8 proceeds (including those found in the financial serv-
9 ices industry), as well as any practices that have not
10 had success combating wildlife trafficking financing
11 and proceeds;

12 (10) a discussion of ways in which existing
13 laws, multilateral agreements, and forums could be
14 expanded or modified to combat wildlife trafficking
15 financing and disrupt its proceeds;

16 (11) an identification of tools of international
17 and national engagement, including partnerships
18 with private sector and international financial insti-
19 tutions, that could be coordinated to combat wildlife
20 trafficking financing and disrupt its proceeds;

21 (12) recommendations about ways in which
22 interdisciplinary collaboration across Federal agen-
23 cies could be incentivized to maximize information
24 and analysis from investigations into other types of
25 trafficking and which may benefit from the informa-

1 tion and analysis gleaned from wildlife trafficking
2 investigations;

3 (13) an examination of how data collection, col-
4 laboration, analysis, and technology tools, including
5 artificial intelligence and machine learning might be
6 leveraged to combat wildlife trafficking and its pro-
7 ceeds;

8 (14) a recommendation of whether Congress
9 should renew the wildlife trafficking task force au-
10 thorized in the END Act and sunseting in Decem-
11 ber 2021; and

12 (15) an examination of how anti-corruption ac-
13 tivities and practices could be included in existing
14 Federal and international wildlife trafficking preven-
15 tion and enforcement efforts.

16 (e) CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT.—The report re-
17 quired under subsection (a) may be submitted in classified
18 form but shall have an unclassified annex or executive
19 summary.

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