

119TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

**S.** \_\_\_\_\_

To amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to provide for the selection of a fiscal agent for the Patrick Leahy Lake Champlain Basin Program, and for other purposes.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. WELCH (for himself, Mr. SCHUMER, Mr. SANDERS, and Mrs. GILLIBRAND) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_

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**A BILL**

To amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to provide for the selection of a fiscal agent for the Patrick Leahy Lake Champlain Basin Program, 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 “Patrick Leahy Lake  
5 Champlain Basin Program Enhancements Act of 2026”  
6 or the “LCBP Enhancements Act of 2026”.

1 **SEC. 2. PATRICK LEAHY LAKE CHAMPLAIN BASIN PRO-**  
2 **GRAM.**

3 Section 120 of the Federal Water Pollution Control  
4 Act (33 U.S.C. 1270) is amended—

5 (1) in subsection (a)—

6 (A) in paragraph (2)(A), by striking “New  
7 England Interstate Water Pollution Control  
8 Commission” and inserting “fiscal agent”; and

9 (B) by adding at the end the following:

10 “(3) FISCAL AGENT.—

11 “(A) IN GENERAL.—The Steering Com-  
12 mittee and the Administrator shall jointly select  
13 a qualified entity to serve as the fiscal agent for  
14 the Patrick Leahy Lake Champlain Basin Pro-  
15 gram.

16 “(B) ASSESSMENT.—

17 “(i) IN GENERAL.—Beginning as soon  
18 as practicable after the date of enactment  
19 of the LCBP Enhancements Act of 2026,  
20 and as necessary but not less frequently  
21 than once every 5 years thereafter, the  
22 Steering Committee and the Administrator  
23 shall jointly assess the effectiveness of the  
24 fiscal agent and, if appropriate, select a  
25 new qualified entity to serve as the fiscal  
26 agent through a competitive process.

1 “(ii) STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT.—

2 In carrying out the assessments required  
3 under clause (i), the Steering Committee  
4 and the Administrator shall consult with,  
5 and incorporate feedback from, impacted  
6 stakeholders.

7 “(iii) NO COMPETITIVE PROCESS

8 AFTER SELECTION.—On selection of a fis-  
9 cal agent, the Administrator shall award  
10 funding to the fiscal agent without com-  
11 petition until such time as a new fiscal  
12 agent is selected.

13 “(iv) NEW FISCAL AGENT SELEC-

14 TION.—If the Steering Committee and the  
15 Administrator jointly select a new fiscal  
16 agent pursuant to clause (i)—

17 “(I) the Administrator may de-  
18 obligate unobligated or unexpended  
19 funds from prior awards under clause  
20 (iii) and re-obligate those funds to the  
21 new fiscal agent;

22 “(II) the Steering Committee and  
23 the Administrator shall, to the max-  
24 imum extent practicable, ensure the  
25 continuity of the staff, programming,

1 funding awards, and other activities  
2 and administrative functions of the  
3 Patrick Leahy Lake Champlain Basin  
4 Program, as determined necessary by  
5 the Steering Committee and the Ad-  
6 ministrator; and

7 “(III) the Steering Committee  
8 and the Administrator shall, to the  
9 maximum extent practicable, ensure  
10 that the new fiscal agent—

11 “(aa) is headquartered in  
12 the Lake Champlain drainage  
13 basin;

14 “(bb) only if a suitable enti-  
15 ty described in item (aa) is not  
16 identified, is headquartered in  
17 the State of New York or  
18 Vermont; or

19 “(cc) only if a suitable entity  
20 described in item (bb) is not  
21 identified, maintains a significant  
22 staffing presence, including staff  
23 that would have decisionmaking  
24 authority with respect to the Pat-  
25 rick Leahy Lake Champlain

1 Basin Program, within the Lake  
2 Champlain drainage basin.

3 “(v) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not  
4 later than 90 days after the date on which  
5 an assessment under clause (i) is com-  
6 pleted, the Administrator shall submit to  
7 the Committee on Environment and Public  
8 Works of the Senate and the Committee on  
9 Transportation and Infrastructure of the  
10 House of Representatives a report that de-  
11 scribes the findings of that assessment, in-  
12 cluding a description of the reasons for  
13 maintaining the current fiscal agent or se-  
14 lecting a new fiscal agent.

15 “(C) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The responsibil-  
16 ities of the fiscal agent may include, as jointly  
17 determined appropriate by the Steering Com-  
18 mittee and the Administrator, executing payroll,  
19 paying bills and fulfilling other obligations, de-  
20 veloping and executing funding agreements, and  
21 acting as a fiduciary for the Patrick Leahy  
22 Lake Champlain Basin Program.”;

23 (2) by redesignating subsections (g) through (i)  
24 as subsections (h) through (j), respectively;

1           (3) by inserting after subsection (f) the fol-  
2           lowing:

3           “(g) GREAT LAKES FISHERY COMMISSION.—

4           “(1) IN GENERAL.—The United States Section  
5           of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission may under-  
6           take, fund, and support work on Lake Champlain, in  
7           the Lake Champlain drainage basin, and in other  
8           areas within the Saint Lawrence River basin in  
9           Vermont and New York, including through—

10                   “(A) fisheries and aquatic ecosystem re-  
11                   search, monitoring, restoration, and manage-  
12                   ment;

13                   “(B) sea lamprey control;

14                   “(C) aquatic invasive species prevention  
15                   and mitigation;

16                   “(D) public engagement and education;  
17                   and

18                   “(E) other work to implement the Plan.

19           “(2) AUTHORIZATION.—In carrying out para-  
20           graph (1), the United States Section of the Great  
21           Lakes Fishery Commission may work with the Pat-  
22           rick Leahy Lake Champlain Basin Program, Federal  
23           and State agencies, institutions of higher education,  
24           nonprofit organizations, units of local government,

1 and Canadian federal and Quebec provincial authori-  
2 ties.”;

3 (4) in subsection (h) (as so redesignated)—

4 (A) by redesignating paragraphs (1), (2),  
5 and (3) as paragraphs (3), (2), and (4), respec-  
6 tively, and moving the paragraphs so as to ap-  
7 pear in numerical order;

8 (B) by inserting before paragraph (2) (as  
9 so redesignated) the following:

10 “(1) FISCAL AGENT.—The term ‘fiscal agent’  
11 means an organization, including a nonprofit organi-  
12 zation, interstate commission, or other entity jointly  
13 determined appropriate by the Administrator and  
14 the Steering Committee, that provides fiscal and ad-  
15 ministrative management support for the Patrick  
16 Leahy Lake Champlain Basin Program under the  
17 direction of the Steering Committee and the Admin-  
18 istrator.”; and

19 (C) by adding at the end the following:

20 “(5) STEERING COMMITTEE.—The term ‘Steer-  
21 ing Committee’ means the Steering Committee es-  
22 tablished by the Lake Champlain Management Con-  
23 ference on October 9, 1996, to implement the Lake  
24 Champlain Management Plan and maintained under  
25 the most recent Memorandum of Understanding on

1 Environmental Cooperation on the Management of  
2 Lake Champlain entered into between the State of  
3 New York, the State of Vermont, and, if the Prov-  
4 ince of Quebec elects to participate, the Province of  
5 Quebec.”; and

6 (5) in subsection (j) (as so redesignated), by  
7 striking “2027” and inserting “2032”.