AMENDMENT NO. _______ Calendar No. _______

Purpose: In the nature of a substitute.


S. 2802

To amend the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 to reauthorize and modify the John H. Prescott Marine Mammal Rescue and Response Grant Program, and for other purposes.

Referred to the Committee on ________________ and ordered to be printed

Ordered to lie on the table and to be printed

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE intended to be proposed by Ms. Cantwell

Viz:

1. Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

3. SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

4. This Act may be cited as the “Marine Mammal Research and Response Act of 2019”.

6. SEC. 2. DATA COLLECTION AND DISSEMINATION.

7. Section 402 of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1421a) is amended—

9. (1) in subsection (b)—

10. (A) in paragraph (1)(A), by inserting “or entangled” after “stranded”;

11. ————
(B) in paragraph (3)—

(i) by striking "strandings," and inserting "strandings and entanglements, including unusual mortality events, ";

(ii) by inserting "stranding" before "region"; and

(iii) by striking "marine mammals; and" and inserting "marine mammals and entangled marine mammals to allow comparison of the causes of illness and deaths in stranded marine mammals and entangled marine mammals with physical, chemical, and biological environmental parameters; and"; and

(C) in paragraph (4), by striking "analyses, that would allow comparison of the causes of illness and deaths in stranded marine mammals with physical, chemical, and biological environmental parameters." and inserting "analyses."; and

(2) by striking subsection (c) and inserting the following:

"(c) DATA AVAILABILITY.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall develop a program to make information, including any data
and metadata collected under subsection (b), available to researchers, stranding network participants, and the public—

“(A) to improve real-time coordination of response to stranding and entanglement events across geographic areas and between stranding coordinators;

“(B) to identify and quickly disseminate information on potential public health risks;

“(C) to facilitate integrated interdisciplinary research;

“(D) to facilitate peer-reviewed publications;

“(E) to archive regional data into 1 national database for future analyses; and

“(F) for education and outreach activities.

“(2) PUBLIC ACCESS.—The Secretary shall ensure that—

“(A) all information, including data and metadata, collected under subsection (b) is archived in a form that is readily accessible and understandable to, and can be easily shared with, the public, as appropriate, through the Marine Mammal Health Monitoring and Analysis Platform (Health MAP); and
“(B) not later than 60 days after the date on which any information, including any data and metadata collected under paragraph (1), (2), or (3) of subsection (b), is collected, that information is made readily available to stranding network participants, other qualified scientists, employees of the Federal Government, and the public through the Health MAP and the Observation System.

“(d) DATA REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—The Secretary shall require each stranding network participant to submit to the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, for inclusion in the Health MAP—

“(1) NOAA Form 89–864 (OMB #0648–0178) and NOAA Form 89–878 (OMB #0648–0178), or similar successor forms, not later than 30 days after the date of a response to a stranding or entanglement event;

“(2) the information, including any data and metadata described in paragraphs (1) and (2) of subsection (b), not later than 30 days after the date on which the information is available or updated, as applicable; and
"(3) the information, including any data and metadata described in paragraphs (3) and (4) of subsection (b), not later than 30 days after the date on which the stranding network responds to a stranding or entanglement event.”.

SEC. 3. STRANDING OR ENTANGLEMENT RESPONSE AGREEMENTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 403 of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1421b) is amended—

(1) in the section heading by inserting "OR ENTANGLEMENT" before "RESPONSE"; and

(2) in subsection (a), by striking the period at the end and inserting "or entanglement.”.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in the first section of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (Public Law 92–522; 86 Stat. 1027) is amended by striking the item related to section 403 and inserting the following:

"Sec. 403. Stranding or entanglement response agreements.”.

SEC. 4. UNUSUAL MORTALITY EVENT ACTIVITY FUNDING.

Section 405 the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1421d) is amended—

(1) by striking subsection (b) and inserting the following:

“(b) USES.—Amounts in the Fund—
“(1) shall be available only for use by the Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of the Interior, and dispersed among claimants based on budgets approved by the Secretary prior to expenditure—

“(A) to make advance, partial, or progress payments under contracts or other funding mechanisms for property, supplies, salaries, services, and travel costs incurred in acting in accordance with the contingency plan issued under section 404(b) or under the direction of an Onsite Coordinator for an unusual mortality event designated under section 404(a)(2)(B)(iii);

“(B) for reimbursing any stranding network participant for costs incurred in the collection, preparation, analysis, and transportation of marine mammal tissues and samples collected with respect to an unusual mortality event for the Tissue Bank; and

“(C) for the care and maintenance of a marine mammal seized under section 104(c)(2)(D); and

“(2) shall remain available until expended.”; and
(2) in subsection (c)—

(A) in paragraph (2), by striking “and” at the end;

(B) in paragraph (3), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

“(4) except as provided by section 1000(a)(3) of division B of the of the Act entitled “An Act making consolidated appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2000, and for other purposes”, approved November 29, 1999 (16 U.S.C. 1375a), sums collected as fines, penalties, or forfeitures of property for violations of any provision of this Act;

“(5) sums received from emergency declaration grants for marine mammal conservation; and

“(6) not more than $750,000 per fiscal year, as determined by the Secretary of Commerce and the Secretary of the Interior, from each of the amounts appropriated to the Secretary or the Secretary of the Interior for carrying out this Act.”.

SEC. 5. LIABILITY.

Section 406(a) of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1421e(a)) is amended, in the matter preceding paragraph (1)—
(1) by inserting "or entanglement" after "to a stranding"; and

(2) by striking "government" and inserting "Government".

SEC. 6. NATIONAL MARINE MAMMAL TISSUE BANK AND TISSUE ANALYSIS.

Section 407 of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1421f) is amended—

(1) in subsection (c)(2)(A), by striking "the health of marine mammals and" and inserting "marine mammal health and mortality and the health of"; and

(2) in subsection (d), in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by inserting "public" before "access".

SEC. 7. JOHN H. PRESCOTT MARINE MAMMAL RESCUE AND RESPONSE GRANT PROGRAM AND RAPID RESPONSE FUND.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 408 of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1421f–1) is amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 408. JOHN H. PRESCOTT MARINE MAMMAL RESCUE AND RESPONSE GRANT PROGRAM AND RAPID RESPONSE FUND.

"(a) DEFINITION OF EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE.—
“(1) IN GENERAL.—In this section, the term ‘emergency assistance’ means—

“(A) financial assistance provided to respond to, or that results from, a stranding event or entanglement event that—

“(i) causes an immediate increase in the cost of a response, recovery, or rehabilitation that is greater than the usual cost of a response, recovery, or rehabilitation;

“(ii) is cyclical or endemic; and

“(iii) involves a marine mammal that is out of the normal range for that marine mammal; or

“(B) financial assistance provided to respond to, or that results from, a stranding event or an entanglement event that the Secretary considers to be an emergency.

“(2) EXCLUSIONS.—The term ‘emergency assistance’ does not include financial assistance to respond to an unusual mortality event.

“(b) JOHN H. PRESCOTT MARINE MAMMAL RESCUE AND RESPONSE GRANT PROGRAM.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the availability of appropriations or other funding, the Secretary
shall carry out a grant program, to be known as the
'John H. Prescott Marine Mammal Rescue and Re-
response Grant Program' (referred to in this section
as the 'grant program'), to award grants to eligible
stranding network participants or stranding network
collaborators, as described in this subsection.

"(2) PURPOSES.—The purposes of the grant
program are to provide for—

"(A) the recovery, care, or treatment of
sick, injured, or entangled marine mammals;

"(B) responses to marine mammal strand-
ing events that require emergency assistance;

"(C) the collection of data and samples
from living or dead stranded marine mammals
for scientific research or assessments regarding
marine mammal health;

"(D) facility operating costs that are di-
rectly related to activities described in subpara-
graph (A), (B), or (C); and

"(E) development of stranding network ca-
pacity, including training for emergency re-
ponse, where facilities do not exist or are
sparse.

"(3) CONTRACT, GRANT, AND COOPERATIVE
AGREEMENT AUTHORITY.—The Secretary may enter
into a contract, grant, or cooperative agreement with
any eligible stranding network participant or stran-
ding network collaborator, as the Secretary deter-
mines to be appropriate, for the purposes described
in paragraph (2).

"(4) EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall
ensure, to the extent practicable, that funds
awarded under the grant program are distrib-
uted equitably among the stranding regions.

"(B) CONSIDERATIONS.—In determining
priorities among the stranding regions under
this paragraph, the Secretary may consider—

"(i) any episodic stranding, entangle-
ment, or mortality events, except for un-
usual mortality events, that occurred in
any stranding region in the preceding year;

"(ii) any data with respect to average
annual stranding, entanglements, and mort-
tality events per stranding region;

"(iii) the size of the marine mammal
populations inhabiting a stranding region;

"(iv) the importance of the region's
marine mammal populations to the well-
being of indigenous communities; and
"(v) the conservation of protected, depleted, threatened, or endangered marine mammal species.

"(5) APPLICATION.—To be eligible for a grant under the grant program, a stranding network participant shall—

"(A) submit an application in such form and manner as the Secretary prescribes; and

"(B) be in compliance with the data reporting requirements under section 402(d).

"(6) GRANT CRITERIA.—The Secretary and the Secretary of the Interior shall, in consultation with the Marine Mammal Commission, a representative from each of the stranding regions, and other individuals who represent public and private organizations that are actively involved in rescue, rehabilitation, release, scientific research, marine conservation, and forensic science with respect to stranded marine mammals, develop criteria for awarding grants under the grant program.

"(7) LIMITATIONS.—

"(A) MAXIMUM GRANT AMOUNT.—No grant made under the grant program for a single project may exceed $150,000 in any 12-month period.
“(B) UNEXPENDED FUNDS.—Any funds that have been awarded under the grant program but that are unexpended at the end of the 12-month period described in subparagraph (A) shall remain available until expended.

“(8) MATCHING REQUIREMENT.—The non-Federal share of the costs of a project conducted with funds awarded under the grant program shall be not less than 25 percent of the costs of that project.

“(9) ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS AND EXPENSES.—The Secretary’s administrative costs and expenses related to reviewing and awarding grants under the grant program, in any fiscal year may not exceed the greater of—

“(A) 6 percent of the amounts made available each fiscal year to carry out the grant program; or

“(B) $80,000.

“(e) JOHN H. PRESCOTT MARINE MAMMAL RESCUE AND RAPID RESPONSE FUND.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—There is established in the Treasury of the United States an interest-bearing fund, to be known as the ‘John H. Prescott Marine Mammal Rescue and Rapid Response Fund’ (re-
ferred to in this section as the ‘Rapid Response Fund’).

“(2) USE OF FUNDS.—Amounts in the Rapid Response Fund shall be available only for use by the Secretary to provide emergency assistance.

“(3) MATCHING REQUIREMENT.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the non-Federal share of the costs of an activity conducted with amounts from the Rapid Response Fund shall be not less than 25 percent of the costs.

“(B) WAIVER.—The Secretary may waive the matching requirement under subparagraph (A) for emergency assistance.

“(C) IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS.—In determining whether the requirement under subparagraph (A) is met, the Secretary may apply to the non-Federal share of an activity conducted with amounts from the Rapid Response Fund the amount of funds and the fair market value of property and services provided by non-Federal sources and used for the activity.

“(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out the grant program
$7,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2020 through 2025, to remain available until expended, of which for each fiscal year—

"(A) $6,000,000 shall be made available to the Secretary of Commerce; and

"(B) $1,000,000 shall be made available to the Secretary of the Interior.

"(2) JOHN H. PRESCOTT MARINE MAMMAL RESCUE AND RAPID RESPONSE FUND.—

"(A) Authorization of Appropriations.—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Rapid Response Fund $500,000 for each of fiscal years 2020 through 2025.

"(B) Transfer of Funds.—In addition to amounts appropriated pursuant to an authorization of appropriations under subparagraph (A), there shall be deposited into the Fund not more than $500,000 for each fiscal year (as determined by the Secretary) from amounts appropriated to the Secretary for carrying out this title and other titles of this Act.

"(C) Availability of Funds.—Amounts in the Fund shall remain available until expended, without regard to any law related to
the negotiation, award, or administration of any contract, grant, or cooperative agreement.

"(e) ACCEPTANCE OF DONATIONS.—For the purposes of carrying out this section, the Secretary may solicit, accept, receive, hold, administer, and use gifts, devises, and bequests without any further approval or administrative action."

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in the first section of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (Public Law 92–522; 86 Stat. 1027) (as amended by section 3(b)) is amended by striking the item related to section 408 and inserting the following:

"Sec. 408. John H. Prescott Marine Mammal Rescue and Response Grant Program and Rapid Response Fund."

SEC. 8. HEALTH MAP.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Title IV of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1421 et seq.) is amended by inserting after section 408 the following:

"SEC. 408A. MARINE MAMMAL HEALTH MONITORING AND ANALYSIS PLATFORM (HEALTH MAP).

"(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of the Marine Mammal Research and Response Act of 2019, the Secretary, acting through the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, in consultation with the Secretary of the Interior and the Marine Mammal Commission, shall—"
“(1) establish a marine mammal health monitoring and analysis platform (referred to in this Act as the ‘Health MAP’);

“(2) incorporate the Health MAP into the Observation System; and

“(3) make the Health MAP—

“(A) publicly accessible through the web portal of the Observation System; and

“(B) interoperable with other national data systems or other data systems for management or research purposes, as practicable.

“(b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of the Health MAP are—

“(1) to promote—

“(A) interdisciplinary research among individuals with knowledge and experience in marine mammal science, marine mammal veterinary and husbandry practices, medical science, and oceanography, and with other marine scientists;

“(B) timely and sustained dissemination and availability of marine mammal health, stranding, entanglement, and mortality data;
“(C) identification of spatial and temporal patterns of marine mammal mortality, disease, and stranding;

“(D) evaluation of marine mammal health in terms of mortality, as well as sublethal marine mammal health impacts;

“(E) improved collaboration and forecasting of marine mammal and larger ecosystem health events;

“(F) rapid communication and dissemination of information regarding marine mammal strandings that may have implications for human health, such as those caused by harmful algal blooms; and

“(G) increased accessibility of data in a user friendly visual interface for public education and outreach; and

“(2) to contribute to an ocean health index that incorporates marine mammal health data.

“(c) REQUIREMENTS.—The Health MAP shall—

“(1) integrate in situ, remote, and other marine mammal health, stranding, and mortality data, including visualizations and metadata, collected by marine mammal stranding networks, Federal, State,
local, and Tribal governments, private partners, and academia; and

“(2) be designed—

“(A) to enhance data and information availability, including data sharing among stranding network participants, scientists, and the public within and across stranding network regions;

“(B) to facilitate data and information access across scientific disciplines, scientists, and managers;

“(C) to facilitate public access to national and regional marine mammal health, stranding, entanglement, and mortality data, including visualizations and metadata, through the national and regional data portals of the Observation System; and

“(D) in collaboration with, and with input from, States and stranding network participants.

“(d) PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES.—The Secretary shall establish and implement policies, protocols, and standards for—
“(1) reporting marine mammal health data collected by stranding networks consistent with subsections (c) and (d) of section 402;

“(2) promptly transmitting health data from the stranding networks and other appropriate data providers to the Health MAP;

“(3) disseminating and making publicly available data on marine mammal health, stranding, entanglement, and mortality data in a timely and sustained manner; and

“(4) integrating additional marine mammal health, stranding, or other relevant data as the Secretary determines appropriate.

“(e) CONSULTATION.—The Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration shall maintain and update the Health MAP in consultation with the Secretary of the Interior and the Marine Mammal Commission.

“(f) CONTRIBUTIONS.—For purposes of carrying out this section, the Secretary may solicit, accept, receive, hold, administer, and use gifts, devises, and bequests without any further approval or administrative action.”.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in the first section of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 (Public Law 92–522; 86 Stat. 1027)
(as amended by section 7(b)) is amended by inserting after
the item related to section 408 the following:

"Sec. 408A. Health MAP."

SEC. 9. REPORTS TO CONGRESS.

(a) In General.—Title IV of the Marine Mammal
Protection Act of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1421 et seq.) (as
amended by section 8(a)) is amended by inserting after
section 408A the following:

"SEC. 408B. REPORTS TO CONGRESS.

(a) Definition of Appropriate Committees of
Congress.—In this section, the term 'appropriate com-
mittees of Congress' means—

"(1) the Committee on Commerce, Science, and
Transportation of the Senate;

"(2) the Committee on Natural Resources of
the House of Representatives; and

"(3) the Committee on Science, Space, and
Technology of the House of Representatives.

(b) Health MAP Status Report.—

"(1) In General.—Not later than 2 year after
the date of enactment of the Marine Mammal Re-
search and Response Act of 2019, the Administrator
of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Adminis-
tration, in consultation with the Marine Mammal
Commission, the Secretary of the Interior, and the
National Ocean Research Leadership Council, shall
submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report describing the status of the Health MAP.

"(2) REQUIREMENTS.—The report under paragraph (1) shall include—

"(A) a detailed evaluation of the data made publically available through the Health MAP;

"(B) a detailed list of any gaps in data collected pursuant to the Health MAP, a description of the reasons for those gaps, and recommended actions to close those gaps;

"(C) an analysis of the effectiveness of using the website of the Observation System as the platform to collect, organize, visualize, archive, and disseminate marine mammal stranding and health data;

"(D) a list of publications, presentations, or other relevant work product resulting from, or produced in collaboration with, the Health MAP;

"(E) a description of emerging marine mammal health concerns and the applicability of those concerns to human health;

"(F) an analysis of the feasibility of the Observation System being used as an alert sys-
tem during stranding events, entanglement events, and unusual mortality events for the stranding network, Observation System partners, Health MAP partners, Federal and State agencies, and local and Tribal governments;

"(G) an evaluation of the use of Health MAP data to predict broader ecosystem events and changes that may impact marine mammal or human health and specific examples of proven or potential uses of Observation System data for those purposes; and

"(H) recommendations for the Health MAP with respect to—

"(i) filling any identified data gaps;

"(ii) standards that could be used to improve data quality, accessibility, transmission, interoperability, and sharing;

"(iii) any other strategies that would contribute to the effectiveness and usefulness of the Health MAP; and

"(iv) the funding levels needed to maintain and improve the Health MAP.

"(c) DATA GAP ANALYSIS.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 5 years after the date on which the report required under
subsection (b)(1) is submitted, and every 5 years thereafter, the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, in consultation with the Marine Mammal Commission and the Secretary of the Interior, shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a data gap analysis, as described in paragraph (2).

“(2) REQUIREMENTS.—The data gap analysis under paragraph (1) shall include—

“(A) an overview of existing participants within a marine mammal stranding network;

“(B) an identification of coverage needs and participant gaps within a network;

“(C) an identification of data and reporting gaps from members of a network; and

“(D) an analysis of how stranding and health data are shared and made available to scientists, academics, State, local, and Tribal governments, and the public.

“(d) MARINE MAMMAL RESPONSE CAPABILITIES IN THE ARCTIC.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of the Marine Mammal Research and Response Act of 2019, the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Adminis-
tration, in consultation with the Marine Mammal Commission and the Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, shall submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report describing the response capabilities for sick and injured marine mammals in the Arctic region of the United States.

"(2) Arctic.—The term 'Arctic' has the meaning given the term in section 112 of the Arctic Research and Policy Act of 1984 (15 U.S.C. 4111).

"(3) Requirements.—The report under paragraph (1) shall include—

"(A) a description, developed in consultation with the Fish and Wildlife Service of the Department of the Interior, of all marine mammal stranding agreements in place for the Arctic region of the United States, including species covered, response capabilities, facilities and equipment, and data collection and analysis capabilities;

"(B) a list of State and local government agencies that have personnel trained to respond to marine mammal strandings in the Arctic region of the United States;

"(C) an assessment of potential response and data collection partners and sources of
local information and knowledge, including
Alaska Native people and villages;

"(D) an analysis of spatial and temporal
trends in marine mammal strandings and un-
usual mortality events that are correlated with
changing environmental conditions in the Arctic
region of the United States;

"(E) a description of training and other
resource needs to meet emerging response re-
quirements in the Arctic region of the United
States;

"(F) an analysis of oiled marine mammal
response and rehabilitation capabilities in the
Arctic region of the United States, including
personnel, equipment, facilities, training, and
husbandry capabilities, and an assessment of
factors that affect response and rehabilitation
success rates; and

"(G) recommendations to address future
stranding response needs for marine mammals
in the Arctic region of the United States."

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS AMENDMENT.—The table
of contents in the first section of the Marine Mammal Pro-
tection Act of 1972 (Public Law 92–522; 86 Stat. 1027)
(as amended by section 8(b)) is amended by inserting after
the item related to section 408A the following:
"Sec. 408B. Reports to Congress."

SEC. 10. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.
Section 409 of the Marine Mammal Protection Act
of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1421g) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking "1993 and
1994;" and inserting "2020 through 2025;";

(2) in paragraph (2), by striking "1993 and
1994;" and inserting "2020 through 2025;"; and

(3) in paragraph (3), by striking "fiscal year
1993." and inserting "for each of fiscal years 2020
through 2025."

SEC. 11. DEFINITIONS.
Section 410 of the Marine Mammal Protection Act
of 1972 (16 U.S.C. 1421h) is amended—

(1) by redesignating paragraphs (1) through
(6) as paragraphs (2), (5), (6), (7), (9), and (10),
respectively;

(2) by inserting before paragraph (2) (as so re-
designated) the following:
"(1) The term ‘entangle’ or ‘entanglement’
means an event in the wild in which a living or dead
marine mammal has gear, rope, line, net, or other
material wrapped around or attached to the marine
mammal and is—
“(A) on a beach or shore of the United States; or

“(B) in navigable waters of the United States.”;

(3) in paragraph (2) (as so redesignated) by striking “The term” and inserting “Except as used in section 408, the term”;

(4) by inserting after paragraph (2) (as so redesignated) the following:

“(3) The term ‘Health MAP’ means the Marine Mammal Health Monitoring and Analysis Platform established under section 408A(a)(1).

“(4) The term ‘Observation System’ means the National Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System established under section 12304 of the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act of 2009 (33 U.S.C. 3603).”; and

(5) by inserting after paragraph (7) (as so redesignated) the following:

“(8) The term ‘stranding region’ means a geographic region designated by the Secretary for purposes of administration of this Act.”.

SEC. 12. STUDY ON MARINE MAMMAL MORTALITY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 12 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the National Academies
of Science, in consultation with the Under Secretary of
Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, shall conduct a
study evaluating the connections among marine heat
waves, frequency and intensity of harmful algal blooms,
prey availability, and habitat degradation, and the impacts
of these conditions on marine mammal mortality.

(b) REPORT.—The National Academies of Science, in
consultation with the Under Secretary of Commerce for
Oceans and Atmosphere, shall prepare and submit to Con-
gress a report containing the results of the study described
in subsection (a). The report shall identify priority re-
search activities, opportunities for collaboration, and cur-
rent gaps in effort and resource limitations related to ad-
vancing scientific understanding of how ocean heat waves,
harmful algae blooms, availability of prey, and habitat
degradation impact marine mammal mortality. The report
shall include recommendations for policies needed to miti-
gate and respond to mortality events.