

BLUE PACIFIC ACT

SECTION-BY-SECTION SUMMARY

To establish a comprehensive, long-term United States strategy and policy for the Pacific Islands region, and for other purposes.

SEC. 1. SHORT TITLE AND TABLE OF CONTENTS.

- Establishes the short title of this bill as the “Boosting Long-term U.S. Engagement in the Pacific” or “BLUE Pacific” Act.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

SEC. 3. STATEMENT OF POLICY.

SEC. 4. DEFINITIONS.

- Defines “appropriate congressional committees” and “Pacific Islands” for the purposes of this Act.

SEC. 5. AUTHORITY TO CONSOLIDATE REPORTS; FORM OF REPORTS.

- Permits reports required under this Act to be consolidated.
- Establishes that each report required by this Act shall be submitted in unclassified form but may contain a classified annex.

TITLE I –DIPLOMATIC PRESENCE AND SECURITY COOPERATION

SEC. 101. UNITED STATES DIPLOMATIC PRESENCE IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS.

- Express the sense of Congress that the Department of State should implement a strategy to expand its diplomatic presence, including personnel and missions, in the Pacific Islands.
- Directs the Department of State to assess and report on U.S. diplomatic presence in the Pacific Islands, gaps in such presence, limitations imposed by such gaps on U.S. strategic objectives in the region, and a strategy to increase U.S. diplomatic presence to fill those gaps, including through the establishment of new embassies and diplomatic posts.

SEC. 102. MARITIME SECURITY IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS.

- Expresses the sense of Congress that the United States should seek to participate in and support efforts to coordinate a regional response to maritime security.
- Directs the Secretaries of State and Homeland Security to develop and implement a plan to expand shiprider agreements with the Pacific Islands.
- Directs the Secretary of State to report on United States efforts to promote maritime security in the Pacific Islands, including an assessment of areas in which the United States can contribute to existing regional efforts and a multi-year strategy for implementation of the Indo-Pacific Maritime Security Initiative in the Pacific Islands.
- Authorizes \$50,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2021 through 2025 for this section.

SEC. 103. INTERNATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT ACADEMY FOR THE PACIFIC ISLANDS.

- Directs the Secretary of State to create and implement a strategy to expand coverage of the International Law Enforcement Academies program to the Pacific Islands, including by expanding coverage of ILEA Bangkok to the Pacific Islands or by establishing a new program in the Pacific Islands region. Such strategy shall take into consideration costs of implementation, effectiveness, and capacity of the Pacific Islands to receive sustained law enforcement training programs.

SEC. 104. UNITED STATES SECURITY ASSISTANCE FOR THE PACIFIC ISLANDS.

- Directs the Secretary of State to devise and implement a strategy to provide security assistance to the Pacific Islands for the purposes of enhancing law enforcement, counter-narcotics operations, and maritime enforcement capabilities, as well as building local capacity to provide essential services and respond to humanitarian challenges.
- Requires this strategy to preserve peace and regional stability and build upon but not duplicate existing security assistance provided by U.S. allies and partners.
- Recognizes existing national police forces and coast guards of the Pacific Islands as eligible partner militaries and national security forces for the purposes of this strategy.
- Requires a report on this strategy to include security challenges to the Pacific Islands, demonstrated security assistance needs, existing security assistance programs, including those of partner countries, programs for training and sustainment, and more.
- Authorizes \$75,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2021 through 2025 for this section.

SEC. 105. TRANSNATIONAL CRIME IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS.

- Directs the Secretary of State to develop and implement an interagency strategy in cooperation with regional partners to combat counterfeiting, cybercrime, crimes associated with illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, drug trafficking, sex trafficking and other forms of transnational crime affecting the Pacific Islands.
- Requires this strategy to be reported to the appropriate congressional committees no later than 180 days after enactment of this Act. Such report should include an identification of threats and challenges related to transnational crime in the region, objectives for this strategy, means of implementation, and measures of success.
- Authorizes \$50,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2021 through 2025 for this section.

TITLE II – DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

SEC. 201. USAID PRESENCE IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS.

- Directs USAID to assess and report on its presence in the Pacific Islands, gaps in such presence, limitations imposed by such gaps on U.S. strategic objectives in the region, and a strategy to expand its presence in the Pacific Islands, including through the establishment of new missions and offices.

SEC. 202. TRADE DEVELOPMENT WITH THE PACIFIC ISLANDS.

- Expresses the sense of Congress that the United States should expand bilateral and multilateral trade with the Pacific Islands to promote development and mutual prosperity, especially through and in cooperation with existing regional frameworks and agreements.
- Directs the United States Trade Representative to create a strategy to promote trade and regional development including through negotiating trade and investment framework agreements, free trade agreements, extending additional trade preferences, or other means.
- Requires a report issued to the appropriate congressional committees no later than 180 days after enactment and annually thereafter.

SEC. 203. TRADE CAPACITY BUILDING INITIATIVE FOR THE PACIFIC ISLANDS.

- Directs USAID to create and execute a trade capacity building initiative, with recognition to and in coordination with existing regional efforts and frameworks, for the Pacific Islands. This initiative will identify economic opportunities for U.S. businesses and those of like-minded partners and focus on:
 - developing human and institutional capacity and infrastructure across multiple sectors of Pacific Islands economies;
 - assisting with the development and implementation of regional trade agreements amongst Pacific Island countries and the facilitation of intra-regional trade flows;
 - supporting minority- and women-owned enterprises and gender equality; and
 - promoting government policies that encourage free and fair competition, sound governance, and business environments conducive to economic growth;
- Requires a report to the appropriate congressional committees detailing this strategy no later than 180 days after enactment of this Act. Further requires a status update on the implementation of this strategy no later than three years after enactment of this Act.
- Authorizes \$400,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2021 through 2025 for this section.

SEC. 204. EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAM FOR NATURAL DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONALS IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS.

- Directs USAID to develop and implement an initiative to conduct educational and training programs for disaster preparedness and emergency management professionals from the Pacific Islands. Such initiative shall also seek to leverage non-governmental expertise in the United States, including from academia and non-profit organizations.
- Requires a report no later than 180 days after enactment of this Act to include an identification of disaster risks for the Pacific Islands, targeted goals for this initiative, means of implementation, and measures of success.
- Authorizes \$10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2021 through 2025 for this section.

SEC. 205. PEACE CORPS IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS.

- Expresses the sense of Congress that the Peace Corps should reopen its programs in as many of the Pacific Islands as possible, including where it has previously operated but has suspended operations.

- Direct Peace Corps to report on demand for Peace Corps presence in the Pacific Islands, limitations to expanding its current presence in the region, and a strategy for returning to the Pacific Islands.

SEC. 206. PUBLIC HEALTH IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS.

- Directs USAID to devise and implement a strategy for improving health care outcomes in the Pacific Islands. This strategy shall be aligned with existing regional efforts and be coordinated by existing regional institutions and frameworks.
- Such strategy shall be provided via a report to the appropriate congressional committees and be made publicly available no later than 180 days after enactment of this Act. This report shall include an identification of health care challenges in the region, objectives to address such challenges, means of implementation, and measures of success.
- Authorizes \$50,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2021 through 2025 for this section.

SEC. 207. EDUCATION COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE PACIFIC ISLANDS.

- Directs USAID to devise and implement a strategy for improving educational outcomes in the Pacific Islands and increase educational exchange between the United States and the Pacific Islands. This strategy shall be coordinated with existing regional initiatives such as the Pacific Regional Education Framework.
- Requires a report to the appropriate congressional committees no later than 180 days after enactment of this Act. This report shall include an identification of education challenges in the region, objectives to address such challenges, means of implementation, and measures of success.
- Authorizes \$25,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2021 through 2025 to carry out this section.

SEC. 208. CLIMATE CHANGE IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS.

- Directs USAID to devise, report and implement a strategy for climate change adaptation assistance to the Pacific Islands focusing on coastal zone management, food security and water resource management. This strategy shall include close coordination with existing regional organizations and frameworks for climate adaptation.
- Requires a report to the appropriate congressional committees no later than 180 days after enactment.
- Authorizes \$100,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2021 through 2025 for this section.

SEC. 209. CLIMATE RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENERGY SECURITY IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS.

- Directs USAID to create a strategy to invest in and improve critical infrastructure in the Pacific Islands, including in transport connectivity, information and communications technology, and energy security, with an emphasis on climate resilient infrastructure and clean energy programs.
- Directs U.S. representatives to the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and Asian Development Bank to use the voice and vote of the United States to support climate resilient infrastructure projects in the Pacific Islands.

- Requires a report to the appropriate congressional committees no later than 180 days after enactment of this Act and an update no later than three years after enactment.
- Authorizes \$200,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2021 through 2025 for this section.

SEC. 210. COORDINATION WITH OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES AND COOPERATION AND PARTICIPATION OF NONGOVERNMENTAL UNITED STATES ENTITIES.

- Directs USAID, in carrying out sections 203, 204, 206, 207, 208, and 209, to coordinate with relevant U.S. agencies especially with regards to the Freely Associated States and seek the cooperation and participation of U.S. businesses, NGOs, and institutions of higher education.

TITLE III – PROMOTION OF UNITED STATES VALUES

SEC. 301. FREEDOM OF THE PRESS.

- Directs Secretary of State, in coordination with the USAID Administrator, to devise and implement a strategy for professional exchanges and other activities that empower the press and promote press freedom with journalists and media professionals from the Pacific Islands.
- Requires a report to the appropriate congressional committees no later than 180 days after enactment. The report shall establish goals of this strategy, means of implementation, and metrics of success.
- Authorizes \$10,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2021 through 2025 for this section.

SEC. 302. U.S. AGENCY FOR GLOBAL MEDIA.

- Directs the U.S. Agency for Global Media to devise and implement a plan to provide expanded media content to the Pacific Islands and partner with journalists in the Pacific Islands.
- Requires a report to the appropriate congressional committees no later than 180 days after enactment. This report shall include an assessment of facilities and costs expected for expanding coverage to the Pacific Islands, options for Voice of America affiliates, and means of evaluating success.
- Authorizes \$5,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2021 through 2025 for this section.

SEC. 303. GENDER EQUALITY.

- Affirms the importance of gender equality and women’s empowerment to our policy in the Pacific Islands and recognizes existing regional frameworks and platforms on gender equality.
- Directs the Secretary of State and the USAID Administrator to promote gender equality in our political, economic, social and cultural development programs in the Pacific Islands.

SEC. 304. PACIFIC ISLANDS LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

- Directs the Secretary of State to develop and implement a Pacific Islands Leadership Program to promote educational and professional development for young adult leaders

and professionals from the Pacific Islands with a demonstrated passion to contribute to the continued development of the Pacific Islands. This program may be carried out via a competitive grant by the Department of State to qualified organizations with demonstrated expertise in the Pacific Islands, small grants to qualified young Pacific Islands leaders, regional workshops and professional fellowships, and in people-to-people exchanges.

- Requires a report to the appropriate congressional committees no later than 180 days after enactment of this Act.
- Authorizes \$10,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2021 through 2025 for this section.

SEC. 305. CIVIL SOCIETY ENGAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT.

- Directs USAID to develop and implement a program to promote civil society development in the Pacific Islands for the purposes of strengthening independent media and press freedom, empowering citizens, strengthening rule of law and government accountability, and promoting democratic political culture.
- Authorizes this program to include technical assistance and support, small grants to qualified civil society organizations, and competitive grants to U.S. organizations with demonstrated expertise in civil society development and the Pacific Islands.
- Requires a report to the appropriate congressional committees no later than 180 days after enactment of this Act.
- Authorizes \$15,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2021 through 2025 for this section.