To oppose the permitting of deep seabed mining and exploration for deep seabed mining, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. Case introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on

A BILL

To oppose the permitting of deep seabed mining and exploration for deep seabed mining, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. OPPOSITION TO PERMITTING OF DEEP SEABED MINING AND EXPLORATION FOR DEEP SEABED MINING.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) As determined by the United Nations, most recently in its Sustainable Development Goals report, our world’s oceans are at great risk from a
number of factors, including atmospheric change, resource extraction and pollution;

(2) The United Nation’s 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, launched by the 2015 UN Summit in New York, established Sustainable Development Goal 14 (SDG 14) to conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources. Target 2 of SDG 14 commits States to sustainably manage marine ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts and strengthen their resilience.

(3) The international marine scientific and policy consensus is that deep seabed mining presents a major risk to the marine environment, including: the direct loss of unique and ecologically important species; large sediment plumes that will negatively affect ecosystems well beyond the actual mining sites; noise pollution that will cause physiological and behavioral stress to marine species; likely contamination of commercially important species of food fish; and likely negative impacts on carbon sequestration dynamics and deep-ocean carbon storage.

(4) The United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, 15th Conference of Parties, Decision 15/24 encourages member States to ensure that, be-
fore deep seabed mineral exploitation is permitted, the related impacts on the marine environment and biodiversity are sufficiently researched and the risks to the marine ecosystem are sufficiently understood, and sufficient regulation and conditions be imposed to ensure that exploitation does not cause harmful effects to the marine environment and biodiversity.

(5) The 2022 United Nations Environment Programme Financial Initiative report on deep seabed mining states that the financing of such activities is not consistent with Sustainable Blue Economy Finance Principles.

(6) There is currently insufficient scientific information on the deep sea and related marine ecosystems to fully and accurately assess the full risks and impacts of deep seabed mining activities.

(b) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Congress that—

(1) no deep seabed mining should occur in the international seabed area unless and until adoption by the International Seabed Authority of a full and binding regulatory framework in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, in particular Article 145 of the Convention;
(2) there is currently insufficient scientific un-
derstanding of, and an absence of consensus on, the
extent of the risks and impacts of deep seabed min-
ing on ocean and related ecosystems;

(3) a regulatory framework should only be
adopted by the International Seabed Authority on
the basis of a comprehensive scientific understanding
of, and consensus on, the potential risks and impacts
of deep seabed mining on ocean ecosystems and
communities and activities reliant on ocean eco-
systems, including fisheries, indigenous peoples and
coastal communities;

(4) such a comprehensive scientific under-
standing and consensus should only be developed on
the basis of sufficient scientific baseline information
on the full impacts of deep seabed mining on marine
and related ecosystems; and

(5) no deep seabed mining should be permitted
in the international seabed area unless it is con-
ducted in a manner and under a clear and enforce-
able regulatory framework that effectively protects
the marine environment from harmful effects, does
not pose a risk to communities reliant on ocean eco-
systems and prevents damage to the flora and fauna
of the marine environment consistent with the obli-

(c) IN GENERAL.—The President shall, until such time as the President submits to the appropriate congressional committees a certification described in subsection (d) and a report described in subsection (e), direct the United States representative to each relevant international organization to which the United States is a member or observer to take such actions as may be necessary to use the voice, vote, and influence of the United States in such organization to—

(1) call for a moratorium on the permitting of deep seabed mining and exploration for deep seabed mining; and

(3) oppose investments in or other financing or support of deep seabed mining and exploration for deep seabed mining.

(d) CERTIFICATION.—A certification described in this subsection is a certification that—

(1) deep seabed mining regulations have been promulgated by the International Seabed Authority; and

(2) such regulations—
(A) are informed by the scientific consensus on impacts to ocean ecosystems; and

(B) will ensure the effective protection of the marine environment from the harmful effects of deep seabed mining.

(c) REPORT.—A report described in this subsection is a report that includes the following:

(1) The details of the deep seabed mining regulations promulgated by the International Seabed Authority as described in subsection (d).

(2) The scientific consensus on the risks and impacts of such regulations on ocean ecosystems and communities reliant on ocean ecosystems.

(3) The methods by which such regulations ensure the effective protection of the marine environment from harmful effects of deep seabed mining pursuant to subsection (b)(4).