

THE WICKER REPORT

By: United States Senator Roger Wicker



Conservation Corner

by James Cummins
Executive Director
of Wildlife Mississippi

DAVE Says

By Dave Ramsey



Wicker Supports Critical Missions of the Coast Guard

Senate Passes Bipartisan Bill to Reauthorize the Service

After years of negotiations, the Senate has passed a two-year reauthorization of the Coast Guard. The bipartisan legislation is exhaustive, just as are the Coast Guard's wide-ranging missions. Not only does the bill support the tens of thousands of Americans in the service's active-duty, reserve, civilian, and auxiliary forces, but it anticipates the Coast Guard's long-term needs.

The Coast Guard is responsible for carrying out 11 core missions for the American people. One of those missions is search-and-rescue, which Mississippians saw firsthand after Hurricane Katrina. That mission has been repeatedly fulfilled over the past two years as active hurricane seasons brought devastating storms to U.S. coastlines and put American lives at risk.

Another mission is to stop illegal drugs from entering the United States, and the Coast Guard continues to tally major drug busts. Last year, the service set a record for its counterdrug operations, intercepting more than 455,000 pounds of cocaine valued at \$6 billion. On an average day, the Coast Guard could seize upwards of 1,000 pounds of illegal narcotics.

New Ships, Needed Maintenance

To be effective in these missions, the men and women of the Coast Guard need technologically advanced equipment. Mississippi's

shipbuilders have risen to this challenge, building all of the Legend-class national security cutters in the Coast Guard's fleet. The value of these ships is recognized in the Coast Guard bill, which approves the purchase of three more.

Another provision in the bill recognizes urgent maintenance needs, in particular for the Polar Star, our nation's only heavy polar icebreaker. At 42 years old, this vessel is 12 years past its intended service life. However, the strategic importance of the Arctic and its potential as a shipping corridor continue to rise. The United States faces serious geopolitical competition from countries like Russia that have aggressively built a large icebreaker fleet.

Uniform Standard for Commercial Vessels

The Coast Guard bill also addresses concerns from America's commercial vessel operators, who have faced a patchwork of regulations regarding a vessel's ballast water discharge. The discharge of ballast water is important to a ship's buoyancy, but it can also have an environmental impact. The fear is that the discharge of ballast water could inadvertently introduce an invasive and potentially harmful species into a new environment.

To combat these concerns, regulations have been put into place over time by the Coast Guard, EPA, and 25 states.

Wildlife Mississippi applauds the recent announcement by Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke that migration corridors for wildlife will finally be getting much needed attention throughout the United States.

The Secretary announced that, through a public-private

The Coast Guard bill will simplify the situation with the adoption of a uniform, science-based national standard for ballast water discharge. I have been a longtime proponent of streamlining the current regulations, even authoring a standalone bill to do so. I am glad key provisions of my bill were included in the Coast Guard's reauthorization and have earned the Senate's support. The approach combines the enforcement capability of the Coast Guard and the environmental expertise of the Environmental Protection Agency.

The value the Coast Guard provides to the American people is evident in the scope of this reauthorization bill and the dedication by lawmakers to get it right. The service's diverse missions are critical to public safety and national security, as evidenced by the vote of 94 to 6 on the bill's final passage in the Senate.

partnership, \$2.7 million in grants will be dedicated to restoring and enhancing critical migration habitat. The partnership includes the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and ConocoPhillips. The species directly benefiting from this action are migrating herds of mammals.

This announcement is a giant step in the right direction toward the implementation of the Secretary's Order 3362, which is a focus on migration corridors.

Migrating species do not pay any attention to lines on a map or who owns what or who manages what. The best we can do for them is clear a path so they have unobstructed and safe access to the best habitats available to them.

Grant funds will be used to restore habitat quality on degraded winter ranges, historic migration corridors, and stopover areas while addressing issues such as restrictive fencing, dangerous highway crossings, and bottlenecks. Funds will also be available for implementing other measures like conservation easements, and habitat fragmentation and

Why not short-term disability?

Dear Dave,
Why don't you recommend having short-term disability insurance while doing the first three Baby Steps of your plan? It seems like a good time for it, when you're in the beginning stages of getting your finances in order.

Bob

Dear Bob,
You could certainly do that if you want, possibly even through your place of employment. I'm a big fan of folks having long-term disability insurance when they're in their prime wage-earning years. But short-

term disability is something I've always considered to be gimmick insurance, and that's something I don't recommend or buy.

I get the argument, too, that short-term disability coverage usually isn't very expensive. But during the first two Baby Steps — getting \$1,000 beginner emergency fund set aside, and paying off everything but the house — you're trying to limit expenses as much as possible. Chances are you wouldn't need it in Baby Step 3, because that covers your full emergency fund of three to six months of expenses.

Hope that helps, Bob!

—Dave

connectivity.

The other piece of good news is that this is a collaborative partnership of stakeholders. When you have the residing state and federal wildlife and land agencies, tribal agencies, highway departments, private landowners, conservation organizations, and industry joining forces, that's when things get done. We applaud Secretary Zinke and his fine staff, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and ConocoPhillips for putting this initiative together. Our nation's wild-

life will be the better for it.

Those eligible for grant funding include, non-profit 501(c) organizations, U.S. Federal government agencies, state government agencies, local governments, municipal governments, and Indian tribes.

James L. Cummins is executive director of Wildlife Mississippi, a non-profit, conservation organization founded to conserve, restore and enhance fish, wildlife and plant resources throughout Mississippi. Their website is www.wildlifemiss.org.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Holmes County Homeowner Rehabilitation Project

Holmes County Board of Supervisors applied to Mississippi Home Corporation for funding through the HOME Investment Partnership Program (Homeowner Rehabilitation/Reconstruction). The State of Mississippi has allocated approximately \$3.5 million that will be made available to cities/towns/counties on a competitive basis to undertake homeowner rehabilitation/reconstruction activities. The activities for which these funds may be used are in the areas of affordable housing for low and very low-income persons. Holmes County has been awarded a grant to undertake the rehabilitation of up to 10 homes. To be eligible the home and homeowner must meet the following criteria:

- Homes must be located in Holmes County.
- Must meet the low-income threshold for Holmes County. (Provided at workshop)
- Must have a clear deed for the property for at least 1 yr./12 months.
- Show proof that property taxes are current (statement from Holmes County Tax Assessor)

Applications and instructions are currently available at the Holmes County Administrators Office located at 408 Court Square, Lexington, MS 39095.

More specific details about the homeowner application process and eligibility will be made available at a public meeting (Workshop will be held during this time) in the Holmes County Board of Supervisor's Board Room located at 408 Court Square, Lexington, Mississippi 39095 on Monday, December 10, 2018 from 3:00 P.M. to 5:00 P.M.

The Holmes County Board of Supervisors will abide by and pledge to promote Fair Housing, Equal Opportunity, and Section 3 rules and regulations according to the above program requirements.

If a translator is needed for non-English speaking persons. Please contact North Central Planning and Development District at 662-283-2675 at least 5 days prior to the meeting in an effort to accommodate this request.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

Town of Goodman
Homeowner Rehabilitation Project

The Town of Goodman applied to Mississippi Home Corporation for funding through the HOME Investment Partnership Program-Homeowner Rehabilitation/Reconstruction. The State of Mississippi has allocated approximately \$3.5 million that will be made available to cities/towns/counties on a competitive basis to undertake homeowner rehabilitation/reconstruction activities. The activities for which these funds may be used are in the areas of affordable housing for low and very low-income persons. The Town of Goodman has been awarded a grant to undertake the rehabilitation of approximately 4 homes and the reconstruction/replacement of 2 homes located in the city limits of Goodman. To be eligible the home and homeowner must meet the following criteria:

- Must meet the HUD low-income threshold for Holmes County.
- Must have a clear deed for the property for at least 1 yr./12 months.
- Show proof that property taxes are current (statement from Holmes County Tax Assessor)
- Have proof of residency for at least 12 months (Utility bills, Water or electricity)

Applications and instructions are currently available at the Goodman Town Hall office located at 9912 Main Street, Goodman, MS 39079.

More specific details about the homeowner application process and eligibility will be made available at a public meeting to be held in the Goodman Town Hall office located at 9912 Main Street, Goodman, MS 39079 in the board room on Monday December, 10 2018 from 3:00 P.M. to 5:30 P.M.

The Town of Goodman will abide by and pledge to promote Fair Housing, Equal Opportunity, and Section 3 rules and regulations according to the above program requirements.

If a translator is needed for non-English speaking persons. Please contact North Central Planning and Development District at 662-283-2675 at least 5 days prior to the meeting in an effort to accommodate this request.

We work to provide opportunities for Mississippi.



At Entergy Mississippi, we work hard to make sure local suppliers and contractors are aware of potential opportunities to work with us, which helps grow the economies of the communities we serve.

If you are a Mississippi supplier or contractor that performs work related to construction extension and/or repair of electric facilities and would like to learn about training and bid opportunities, visit enterymississippi.com/hiremississippi or call 844-387-9675.

