



# Overview of Recent Legislation Related to Stranding Networks

*Brady O'Donnell*



# Marine Mammal Research and Response Act

- Updated Title IV of the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA)
- Similar versions introduced in 2016 and 2019
- Introduced by Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA) in spring of 2021
  - Cosponsored by Senators Murkowski (R-AK), Sullivan (R-AK), Carper (D-DE), and Padilla (D-CA)
  - Companion bill introduced in the House by Representative Murphy (D-FL-07)
- Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee & the House Natural Resources Committee
- Upon request, agencies provided feedback
- Signed into law when attached to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023



# Marine Mammal Research and Response Act Updates to Title IV of MMPA

- Updates to Data Collection and Dissemination
  - Included direction for NOAA to make data on strandings available to network participants
  - Requirement for NOAA to collaborate with marine mammal research and stranding community to develop and update data collection guidance
- Addition of language related to “Entanglement Response”
- Under Prescott Grant Program
  - Emergency Award Flexibility
  - Equitable distribution of funds across regions
  - Maximum grant increased from \$100,000 to \$150,000
  - Transparency





# Marine Mammal Research and Response Act Authorization of Funding 2023-2028

- Reauthorize the Prescott Grant Program at \$7M (\$6 NOAA/ \$1 million USFWS) – **Appropriated NOAA \$4.5M and \$2.3M to USFWS**
- Authorize the Joseph R. Geraci Marine Mammal Rescue and Rapid Response Fund at \$500,000
  - For use by NOAA to provide emergency assistance
- Authorize \$500,000 for the Marine Mammal Unusual Mortality Event Fund
  - to compensate emergency responders in the event of large, unexpected die-offs of marine mammals
- Reauthorize \$250,000 for National Marine Mammal Tissue Bank



# Marine Mammal Research and Response Act

## Establishment of Health MAP

- Establish the Marine Mammal Health Monitoring and Analysis Platform (Health MAP),
  - which would be incorporated into the National Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System
- Required to be designed to enhance data and information availability and access
- Required to be designed in collaboration with, and with input from, States and stranding network participants
- NOAA must consult with USFWS and the Commission
- No funding for Health MAP



# Marine Mammal Research and Response Act Reports and Studies

- Health MAP Status Report – due to Congress end of 2024
  - Gaps and Recommendations, including funding levels needed to maintain and improve Health MAP
  - Data Gap Analysis due at the end of 2029, and every 10 years thereafter
- Marine Mammal Response Capabilities in the Arctic
  - Report due to Congress end of 2023
- Study on Marine Mammal Mortality – due to Congress end of 2023
  - Connections between marine heat waves, frequency and intensity of HABs, prey availability, and habitat degradation
    - And impacts of conditions on marine mammal mortality.

