

America's Living Library Act of 2026

Overview

The **America's Living Library Act of 2026** would direct the Secretary of Interior to begin, within 180 days, the first phase of a project to collect, catalog, and sequence genomic information of animals, plants, fungi, and microbes on U.S. public lands. The first phase of the project would select a set of National Parks for sample and data collection and eventually expand to all public lands, covering the breadth of organisms in the United States. The effort would establish collections of the physical samples in addition to a public database for genomic data storage.

Background

The National Security Commission on Emerging Biotechnology (NSCEB) assessed in April 2025 that biological data lie at the heart of emerging biotechnologies. The United States must treat biological data as a strategic national resource. While America has one of the most extensive and varied public lands systems in the world—including the National Parks, which cover 85 million acres and a huge variety of climates and topographies—the United States has failed to leverage its own wealth of biological data.

Similar to how Scottish Scientist Alexander Flemming discovered penicillin by studying a fungus that produced the antibiotic for its own survival, studying a wide range of non-human biological data from U.S. public lands—including data from animals, plants, microbes, and fungus—could contribute to transformative biotechnology innovations for the United States.

Harnessing the biological data from, for example, the variety of salamanders at Great Smokey Mountain National Park in North Carolina and Tennessee, the gypsum dune fields and endemic moth species of White Sands National Parks in New Mexico, and organisms living in extreme environments such as the hydrothermal sites in Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming could provide important, cascading scientific insights. Collecting these and other data from our public lands would also ensure that future AI models have the appropriate training data needed to unlock breakthrough discoveries in medicine, agriculture, and industrial production.

H.R. 7832

Sponsor:

Rep. Ro Khanna (D-CA-17)

Original Co-Sponsors:

Rep. Stephanie Bice (R-OK-5)

Rep. Jake Auchincloss (D-MA-4)

S. 4023

Sponsor:

Sen. Todd Young (R-IN)

Original Co-Sponsors:

Sen. Alex Padilla (D-CA)

Sen. Chris Coons (D-DE)

Sen. Tom Cotton (R-AR)

Sen. Kevin Cramer (R-ND)

Sen. Steve Daines (R-MT)

Sen. John Hickenlooper (D-CO)

Sen. Tim Sheehy (R-MT)

Congress established the National Security Commission on Emerging Biotechnology (NSCEB) to assess biotechnology's national security impact and recommend strategies to ensure American leadership.

Read the NSCEB's April 2025 report at <https://www.biotech.senate.gov/final-report>

Legislative Details

01

Establish a sampling, collection, and sequencing process that follows National Park Service and Department of the Interior standards for collection.

02

Create opportunities for education and outreach related to science, biological data, and nature, at the selected National Parks.

03

Create a public database to store genomic information gained through this effort, to include high quality, standardized, AI-ready datasets.

04

Create collection and storage capacity for biological samples in collaboration with the United States Department of Agriculture and Smithsonian Institution.

05

Engage with a broad set of stakeholders to ensure public views and ideas are incorporated into program implementation.

06

Establish or designate an existing office with the U.S. Geological Survey to carry out the America's Living Library project.

Endorsements

- American Alliance for Biomanufacturing
- American Institute of Biological Sciences
- American Society for Microbiology
- Applied Research Institute
- Biotechnology Innovation Organization
- ConservAmerica
- Elanco
- Eli Lilly
- Ginkgo Bioworks
- Inari
- Indiana Life Sciences Association
- Indiana University
- Information Technology and Innovation Foundation
- Natural Science Collections Alliance
- SCSP Action Program

Interested in leading or co-sponsoring this bill?

Please contact ideas@biotech.senate.gov

