

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 706

To improve the biodetection functions of the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 23, 2025

Mr. STRONG (for himself and Mr. HIGGINS of Louisiana) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Homeland Security

A BILL

To improve the biodetection functions of the Department of Homeland Security, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “DHS Biodetection Im-
5 provement Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. DHS UTILIZATION OF DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY NA-**
2 **TIONAL LABORATORIES AND SITES FOR CER-**
3 **TAIN BIODETECTION RESEARCH AND DEVEL-**
4 **OPMENT RELATING TO THE MISSIONS OF**
5 **THE DHS.**

6 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Homeland Secu-
7 rity shall conduct an assessment of how the Department
8 of Homeland Security has utilized Department of Energy
9 national laboratories and sites regarding research and de-
10 velopment in carrying out the missions of the Department
11 of Homeland Security, in accordance with section 309 of
12 the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 189).

13 (b) STRATEGY ON BIODETECTION RESEARCH AND
14 DEVELOPMENT.—Not later than 180 days after the date
15 of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Homeland
16 Security shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Se-
17 curity of the House of Representatives and the Committee
18 on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the
19 Senate the assessment required under subsection (a), to-
20 gether with a strategy for how the Department of Home-
21 land Security will conduct research and development in co-
22 ordination with Department of Energy national labora-
23 tories and sites to address biodetection research and devel-
24 opment of the Department of Homeland Security, includ-
25 ing the following:

1 (1) Identifying biodetection technologies that
2 can, either individually or together, meet the bio-
3 detection mission needs as outlined in Department
4 of Homeland Security capabilities analysis and re-
5 quirements documents and informed by studies pro-
6 duced by the Comptroller General of the United
7 States, such as the National Re-Assessment of the
8 BioWatch Collector Network to Increase the Frac-
9 tion of Population Covered, as developed by the
10 Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Office of
11 the Department in November 2021, and other such
12 future studies as applicable.

13 (2) Developing an acquisition and procurement
14 plan to acquire and provide, in accordance with Fed-
15 eral law, the Federal Acquisition Regulation, and
16 Department of Homeland Security acquisition and
17 procurement management directives, the biodetection
18 technologies referred to in paragraph (1) to existing
19 BioWatch jurisdictions.

20 (3) Conducting periodic external evaluations to
21 identify gaps and potential failure points with re-
22 spect to such biodetection technologies, and recom-
23 mending contingency plans in the event such bio-
24 detection technologies do not perform as expected or
25 intended.

1 (4) Assisting, as appropriate and in partnership
2 with Federal, State, local, and Tribal governments,
3 institutions of higher education (as such term is de-
4 fined in section 101 of the Higher Education Act of
5 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001)), and the private sector, with
6 the development of clearly defined program and
7 technical requirements for future Department of
8 Homeland Security environmental biodetection pro-
9 grams, including any related transformational pro-
10 gram of research and development.

11 (c) REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—Not later than one
12 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-
13 retary of Homeland Security shall provide to the Com-
14 mittee on Homeland Security of the House of Representa-
15 tives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Gov-
16 ernmental Affairs of the Senate an update of the assess-
17 ment and strategy required under this section, including
18 any challenges to implementing such strategy.

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