

Calendar No. 421

119TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

S. 323

To direct the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information to develop a National Strategy to Synchronize Federal Broadband Programs, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 29, 2025

Mr. WICKER (for himself, Mr. LUJÁN, and Mr. WELCH) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

MAY 21, 2026

Reported by Mr. CRUZ, with amendments

[Omit the parts struck through and insert the parts printed in *italic*]

A BILL

To direct the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information to develop a National Strategy to Synchronize Federal Broadband Programs, 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,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Proper Leadership to
3 Align Networks for Broadband Act” or the “PLAN for
4 Broadband Act”.

5 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

6 In this Act:

7 (1) **APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CON-**
8 **GRESS.**—The term “appropriate committees of Con-
9 gress” means—

10 (A) the Committee on Commerce, Science,
11 and Transportation of the Senate; and

12 (B) the Committee on Energy and Com-
13 merce of the House of Representatives.

14 (2) **ASSISTANT SECRETARY.**—The term “Assist-
15 ant Secretary” means the Assistant Secretary of
16 Commerce for Communications and Information.

17 (3) **BROADBAND INTERNET ACCESS SERVICE.**—
18 The term “broadband internet access service” has
19 the meaning given the term in section 8.1(b) of title
20 47, Code of Federal Regulations, or any successor
21 regulation.

22 (4) **COVERED AGENCIES.**—The term “covered
23 agencies” means—

24 (A) the Federal Communications Commis-
25 sion;

26 (B) the Department of Agriculture;

1 (C) the National Telecommunications and
 2 Information Administration;

3 (D) the Department of Health and Human
 4 Services;

5 (E) the Appalachian Regional Commission;

6 (F) the Delta Regional Authority;

7 (G) the Denali Commission;

8 (H) the Economic Development Adminis-
 9 tration;

10 (I) the Department of Education;

11 (J) the Department of the Treasury;

12 (K) the Department of Transportation;

13 (L) the Institute of Museum and Library
 14 Services;

15 (M) the Northern Border Regional Com-
 16 mission;

17 (N) the Department of Housing and
 18 Urban Development; and

19 (O) the Department of the Interior.

20 (5) DEPLOYMENT LOCATIONS MAP.—The term
 21 “Deployment Locations Map” has the meaning given
 22 the term in section 60105(a) of the Infrastructure
 23 Investment and Jobs Act (47 U.S.C. 1704(a)).

24 (6) FEDERAL BROADBAND PROGRAM.—The
 25 term “Federal broadband program” means any pro-

gram administered by a covered agency that is directly or indirectly intended to increase the deployment of, access to, the affordability of, or the adoption of broadband internet access service.

(7) FEDERAL LAND MANAGEMENT AGENCY.—

The term “Federal land management agency” means—

(A) the National Park Service;

(B) the Bureau of Land Management;

(C) the Bureau of Reclamation;

(D) the United States Fish and Wildlife Service;

(E) the Bureau of Indian Affairs; and

(F) the Forest Service.

(8) IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.—The term “Im-

plementation Plan” means the implementation plan developed under section 4(a).

(9) STRATEGY.—The term “Strategy” means

the National Strategy to Synchronize Federal Broadband Programs developed under section 3(a).

SEC. 3. NATIONAL STRATEGY TO SYNCHRONIZE FEDERAL BROADBAND PROGRAMS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Assistant Secretary, in consultation with the covered agencies, shall develop and

1 submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a Na-
2 tional Strategy to Synchronize Federal Broadband Pro-
3 grams to—

4 (1) support better management of Federal
5 broadband programs to deliver on the goal of pro-
6 viding access to high-speed, affordable broadband
7 internet access service to all individuals in the
8 United States, while ensuring that funding for Fed-
9 eral broadband programs is used in the most effi-
10 cient and fiscally responsible manner;

11 (2) synchronize interagency coordination among
12 covered agencies for Federal broadband programs;

13 (3) synchronize interagency coordination re-
14 garding the process for approving the grant of any
15 permit, easement, right of way, or lease to, in, over,
16 or on a building or any other property owned by the
17 Federal Government for the right to install, con-
18 struct, modify, or maintain infrastructure with re-
19 spect to broadband internet access service; and

20 (4) reduce unnecessary barriers, eliminate un-
21 necessary costs, and ease administrative burdens to
22 participate in Federal broadband programs.

23 (b) REQUIREMENTS.—The Strategy shall—

24 (1) list all—

25 (A) Federal broadband programs; and

1 (B) programs that exist at the State and
2 local levels that are directly or indirectly in-
3 tended to increase the deployment of, access to,
4 the affordability of, or the adoption of
5 broadband internet access service;

6 (2) describe current, as of the date on which
7 the Strategy is submitted, Federal efforts to coordi-
8 nate Federal broadband programs;

9 (3) identify gaps and limitations, including
10 laws, regulations, and covered agency policies and
11 practices, that hinder, or may hinder, coordination
12 across Federal broadband programs;

13 (4) establish clear roles and responsibilities for
14 the covered agencies, as well as clear goals, objec-
15 tives, and performance measures, for—

16 (A) the management of all Federal
17 broadband programs; and

18 (B) interagency coordination efforts with
19 respect to Federal broadband programs;

20 (5) address the cost of the Strategy, the sources
21 and types of resources and investments needed to
22 carry out the Strategy, and where those resources
23 and investments should be targeted based on bal-
24 ancing risk reductions with costs;

1 (6) address factors that increase the costs and
2 administrative burdens of participation in Federal
3 broadband programs, including with respect to ac-
4 cess to infrastructure necessary for deployment of
5 broadband internet access service;

6 (7) report information on the effectiveness of
7 each Federal broadband program in terms of how
8 many locations received broadband internet access
9 service or other assistance under each Federal
10 broadband program;

11 (8) address the extent to which covered agency
12 policies and practices do or do not establish a tech-
13 nologically neutral program;

14 (9) recommend incentives, legislative solutions,
15 and administrative actions to help State, local, and
16 Tribal governments more efficiently—

17 (A) distribute, and effectively administer,
18 funding received from Federal broadband pro-
19 grams and avoid duplication of—

20 (i) existing infrastructure with respect
21 to broadband internet access service; and

22 (ii) funded projects with respect to
23 broadband internet access service or such
24 projects otherwise subject to enforceable
25 deployment obligations;

1 (B) resolve conflicts with respect to the
2 funding described in subparagraph (A);

3 (C) use the Deployment Locations Map as
4 a key resource in carrying out subparagraphs
5 (A) and (B); and

6 (D) promote *the safe* access to infrastruc-
7 ture or rights of way necessary for deployment
8 of broadband internet access service, whether
9 privately or government owned or cooperatively
10 organized for broadband communications;

11 (10) recommend incentives, legislative solutions,
12 and administrative actions to—

13 (A) improve the coordination and manage-
14 ment of Federal broadband programs; and

15 (B) eliminate duplication with respect to
16 Federal broadband programs and non-Federal
17 programs with respect to broadband internet
18 access service;

19 (11) describe current, as of the date on which
20 the Strategy is submitted, efforts by covered agen-
21 cies, Federal land management agencies, and State,
22 local, and Tribal governments to streamline the
23 process for granting a permit or access to an ease-
24 ment, right of way, or lease to, in, over, or on a
25 building or any other property owned or controlled

1 by a government for the right to install, construct,
 2 modify, or maintain infrastructure with respect to
 3 broadband internet access service;

4 (12) identify gaps and limitations with respect
 5 to allowing regional, interstate, or cross-border eco-
 6 nomic development organizations to participate in
 7 Federal broadband programs;

8 *(13) with respect to the funding of infrastruc-*
 9 *ture, propose a maximum amount for a subsidy or*
 10 *funding award to provide broadband internet access*
 11 *service to a single location, while allowing for consid-*
 12 *eration of high cost areas, including high cost Tribal*
 13 *areas;*

14 ~~(13)~~(14) address specific issues relating to clos-
 15 ing the gap on Tribal lands with respect to
 16 broadband internet access service; and

17 ~~(14)~~(15) identify measures to prevent fraud and
 18 misuse of amounts made available to carry out Fed-
 19 eral broadband programs, ensure accountability for
 20 the use of such funding, and implement effective re-
 21 porting requirements to measure the success of Fed-
 22 eral broadband programs.

23 **SEC. 4. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.**

24 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 120 days after the
 25 date on which the Assistant Secretary submits the Strat-

1 egy to the appropriate committees of Congress under sec-
 2 tion 3(a), the Assistant Secretary shall develop and submit
 3 to the appropriate committees of Congress an implementa-
 4 tion plan for the Strategy.

5 (b) IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.—The Implementation
 6 Plan shall, at a minimum—

7 (1) provide a plan for implementing the roles,
 8 responsibilities, goals, objectives, and performance
 9 measures for the management of Federal broadband
 10 programs and interagency coordination efforts iden-
 11 tified in the Strategy;

12 (2) if the Strategy identifies policy and prac-
 13 tices that result in programmatic differences among
 14 covered agencies with respect to Federal broadband
 15 programs, provide a plan to streamline and create
 16 consistent policies and practices across all covered
 17 agencies for the purposes of Federal broadband pro-
 18 grams;

19 ~~(3) for Federal broadband programs that are~~
 20 ~~not technologically neutral, determine a ceiling on~~
 21 ~~the amount of a subsidy or funding award to provide~~
 22 ~~broadband internet access service to a single loca-~~
 23 ~~tion, to be consistently applied and adopted by all~~
 24 ~~covered agencies for the funding of infrastructure~~
 25 ~~with respect to broadband internet access service;~~

1 ~~(4)~~(3) provide a plan for holding the covered
 2 agencies accountable for the roles, responsibilities,
 3 goals, objectives, and performance measures identi-
 4 fied in the Strategy;

5 ~~(5)~~(4) describe the roles and responsibilities of
 6 the covered agencies, and the interagency mecha-
 7 nisms, to coordinate the implementation of the
 8 Strategy;

9 ~~(6)~~(5) provide a plan for coordination among
 10 Federal broadband programs and for permitting
 11 processes for infrastructure with respect to
 12 broadband internet access service;

13 ~~(7)~~(6) provide a plan for regular evaluation and
 14 public reporting of Federal broadband programs
 15 against clear objectives and performance measures,
 16 permitting processes for infrastructure with respect
 17 to broadband internet access service, and progress in
 18 implementing the Strategy;

19 ~~(8)~~(7) with respect to the awarding of Federal
 20 funds or subsidies to support the deployment of
 21 broadband internet access service, provide a plan for
 22 the adoption of—

23 (A) common data sets regarding those
 24 awards, including a requirement that covered
 25 agencies use the maps created under title VIII

1 of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C.
2 641 et seq.) and the Deployment Locations
3 Map;

4 (B) applications regarding those awards,
5 as described in section 903(e) of the ACCESS
6 BROADBAND Act (47 U.S.C. 1307(e)); and

7 (C) rules for prohibiting awards by covered
8 agencies in areas identified as served by the
9 maps created under title VIII of the Commu-
10 nications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 641 et seq.)
11 or in areas already subject to an award or en-
12 forceable deployment obligations by a covered
13 agency under a Federal broadband program or
14 a State, local, or Tribal program with respect to
15 broadband internet access service;

16 ~~(9)~~(8) provide a plan to monitor, publicly re-
17 port, and reduce waste, fraud, and abuse in Federal
18 broadband programs, including wasteful spending re-
19 sulting from fragmented, overlapping, and duplica-
20 tive programs;

21 ~~(10)~~(9) require consistent obligation and ex-
22 penditure reporting by covered agencies for Federal
23 broadband programs, which shall be consistent with
24 section 903(c)(2) of the ACCESS BROADBAND

1 Act (47 U.S.C. 1307(c)(2)) and the Deployment Lo-
 2 cations Map;

3 ~~(11)~~(10) provide a plan to increase awareness
 4 of, and participation in, Federal broadband pro-
 5 grams relating to the affordability and adoption of
 6 broadband internet access service; and

7 ~~(12)~~(11) describe the administrative and legisla-
 8 tive action that is necessary to carry out the Strat-
 9 egy.

10 (c) PUBLIC COMMENT.—In developing the Implemen-
 11 tation Plan, the Assistant Secretary shall publish a draft
 12 version of the Implementation Plan in the Federal Reg-
 13 ister for a period of notice and comment (and reply com-
 14 ment) that is not less than 60 days.

15 **SEC. 5. BRIEFINGS AND IMPLEMENTATION.**

16 (a) BRIEFING.—Not later than 21 days after the date
 17 on which the Assistant Secretary submits the Implementa-
 18 tion Plan to the appropriate committees of Congress under
 19 section 4(a), the Assistant Secretary, and appropriate rep-
 20 resentatives from the covered agencies involved in the for-
 21 mulation of the Strategy, shall provide a briefing on the
 22 implementation of the Strategy to the appropriate commit-
 23 tees of Congress.

24 (b) IMPLEMENTATION.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Assistant Secretary
2 shall—

3 (A) implement the Strategy in accordance
4 with the terms of the Implementation Plan; and

5 (B) not later than 90 days after the date
6 on which the Assistant Secretary begins to im-
7 plement the Strategy, and not less frequently
8 than once every 90 days thereafter until the
9 date on which the Implementation Plan is fully
10 implemented, brief the appropriate committees
11 of Congress on the progress in implementing
12 the Implementation Plan.

13 (2) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this
14 subsection may be construed to affect the authority
15 or jurisdiction of the Federal Communications Com-
16 mission or confer upon the Assistant Secretary or
17 any executive agency the power to direct the actions
18 of the Federal Communications Commission, either
19 directly or indirectly.

20 **SEC. 6. GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE STUDY**
21 **AND REPORT.**

22 Not later than 1 year after the date on which the
23 Assistant Secretary submits the Implementation Plan to
24 the appropriate committees of Congress under section

1 4(a), the Comptroller General of the United States shall
2 commence a study—

3 (1) that shall—

4 (A) examine the efficacy of the Strategy
5 and the Implementation Plan in coordinating
6 funding across the Federal Government with re-
7 spect to broadband internet access service;

8 (B) make recommendations regarding how
9 to improve the Strategy and the Implementa-
10 tion Plan;

11 (C) examine any existing or new perform-
12 ance goals and measures for Federal broadband
13 programs;

14 (D) examine any awards made by covered
15 agencies under Federal broadband programs, or
16 under State, local, and Tribal programs with
17 respect to broadband internet access service—

18 (i) in areas identified as served with
19 respect to broadband internet access serv-
20 ice; or

21 (ii) that are duplicative of other
22 awards under such a program; and

23 (E) identify programmatic changes that
24 would prevent occurrences described in subpara-
25 graph (D) in the future; and

1 (2) the results of which the Comptroller Gen-
2 eral shall submit to the appropriate committees of
3 Congress.

4 **SEC. 7. BROADBAND FUNDING MAP REPORTING.**

5 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 60 days after the
6 date of enactment of this Act, the head of each covered
7 agency shall submit to the Assistant Secretary and the ap-
8 propriate committees of Congress a report containing a
9 comprehensive update on the measures that each respec-
10 tive covered agency has taken since May 15, 2023, to co-
11 ordinate with the National Telecommunications and Infor-
12 mation Administration, pursuant to subsection (c)(2)(A)
13 of the ACCESS BROADBAND Act (47 U.S.C.
14 1307(c)(2)(A)), and the Federal Communications Com-
15 mission to populate the Deployment Locations Map.

16 (b) CONTENTS.—Each report required under sub-
17 section (a) shall include—

18 (1) a description of the extent to which the cov-
19 ered agency submitting the report is submitting the
20 data necessary to populate the Deployment Loca-
21 tions Map in a complete and timely manner; and

22 (2) identification of any outstanding challenges
23 associated with the requirement for the submission
24 of data described in paragraph (1).

1 **SEC. 8. TRACKING AND IMPROVING PROCESSING TIMES**
 2 **FOR COMMUNICATIONS USE APPLICATIONS.**

3 Section 6409(b)(3) of the Middle Class Tax Relief
 4 and Job Creation Act of 2012 (47 U.S.C. 1455(b)(3)) is
 5 amended by adding at the end the following:

6 “(E) TRACKING AND IMPROVING PROC-
 7 ESSING TIMES.—

8 “(i) DATA CONTROLS.—An executive
 9 agency shall develop controls to ensure
 10 that data is sufficiently accurate and com-
 11 plete to track the processing time for each
 12 application described in subparagraph (A).

13 “(ii) REQUIREMENT TO ANALYZE, AD-
 14 DRESS, AND REPORT ON DELAY FAC-
 15 TORS.—With respect to the factors that
 16 contribute to delays in processing applica-
 17 tions described in subparagraph (A), an
 18 executive agency shall—

19 “(I) analyze the factors as the
 20 delays are occurring;

21 “(II) take actions to address the
 22 factors; and

23 “(III) provide an annual report
 24 on the factors to—

1 “(aa) the Committee on
2 Commerce, Science, and Trans-
3 portation of the Senate;

4 “(bb) the Committee on En-
5 ergy and Natural Resources of
6 the Senate;

7 “(cc) the Committee on En-
8 ergy and Commerce of the House
9 of Representatives;

10 “(dd) the Committee on
11 Natural Resources of the House
12 of Representatives; and

13 “(ee) each committee of
14 Congress with jurisdiction over
15 the executive agency.

16 “(iii) METHOD FOR ALERTING STAFF
17 TO AT-RISK APPLICATIONS.—An executive
18 agency shall establish a method to alert
19 employees of the executive agency to any
20 application described in subparagraph (A)
21 with respect to which the executive agency
22 is at risk of failing to meet the 270-day
23 deadline under that subparagraph.”.

1 **SEC. 9. MINIMUM BROADBAND PROJECT COST.**

2 Section 41001(6)(A) of the FAST Act (42 U.S.C.
3 4370m(6)(A)) is amended—

4 (1) in clause (iii)(III), by striking “or” at the
5 end;

6 (2) by redesignating clause (iv) as clause (v);

7 and

8 (3) by inserting after clause (iii) the following:

9 “(iv)(I) is subject to NEPA;

10 “(II) involves the construction of in-
11 frastructure for broadband; and

12 “(III) is likely to require a total in-
13 vestment of more than \$5,000,000; or”.

14 **SEC. 10. RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.**

15 Nothing in this Act, or any amendment made by this
16 Act, may be construed to confer authority on the Federal
17 Government, or any State, local, or Tribal government, to
18 regulate broadband internet access service.

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