

Union Calendar No. 228

117TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. R. 5324

[Report No. 117–308]

To provide guidance for and investment in the upgrade and modernization of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Weather Radio All Hazards network, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 22, 2021

Mrs. BICE of Oklahoma (for herself and Ms. SHERRILL) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

MAY 6, 2022

Additional sponsors: Mr. KILMER, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. ELLZEY, and Mr. LATURNER

MAY 6, 2022

Reported with an amendment, committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, and ordered to be printed

[Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in *italic*]

[For text of introduced bill, see copy of bill as introduced on September 22, 2021]

A BILL

To provide guidance for and investment in the upgrade and modernization of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Weather Radio All Hazards network, 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 “NOAA Weather Radio*
5 *Modernization Act of 2021” or “NWR Modernization Act*
6 *of 2021”.*

7 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

8 (a) *ADMINISTRATOR.*—*The term “Administrator”*
9 *means the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and*
10 *Atmosphere and Administrator of the National Oceanic and*
11 *Atmospheric Administration.*

12 (b) *NOAA WEATHER RADIO.*—*The term “NOAA*
13 *Weather Radio” means the National Oceanic and Atmos-*
14 *pheric Administration Weather Radio All Hazards net-*
15 *work.*

16 **SEC. 3. FINDINGS.**

17 *Congress finds the following:*

18 (1) *The NOAA Weather Radio is a nationwide*
19 *network of transmitters that are critical to protecting*
20 *life and property by broadcasting weather and other*
21 *hazard alerts.*

22 (2) *NOAA Weather Radio broadcasts currently*
23 *reach 95 percent of the United States population.*

24 (3) *NOAA Weather Radio broadcasts originate*
25 *from all National Weather Service Offices, but are*

1 *only available via a receiver located in sufficient*
2 *proximity to a radio transmitting tower.*

3 *(4) There are limited options to obtain NOAA*
4 *Weather Radio broadcasts via the Internet or mobile*
5 *device application, which are provided by volunteer*
6 *mechanisms obtaining the audio feed in an ad hoc*
7 *manner.*

8 *(5) NOAA Weather Radio should provide equal*
9 *access and availability to unimpeded broadcasts of*
10 *weather and non-weather hazards to every person lo-*
11 *cated within the United States, its territories, and*
12 *tribal lands.*

13 **SEC. 4. UPGRADING EXISTING SYSTEMS.**

14 *(a) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall, to the*
15 *maximum extent practicable, expand coverage of the NOAA*
16 *Weather Radio and ensure its reliability. In doing so, the*
17 *Administrator shall—*

18 *(1) maintain support for existing systems serv-*
19 *ing areas not covered by or having poor quality cel-*
20 *lular service;*

21 *(2) ensure consistent maintenance and oper-*
22 *ations monitoring, with timely repairs to broadcast*
23 *transmitter site equipment and antennas; and*

1 (3) *enhance the ability to amplify Non-Weather*
2 *Emergency Messages via NOAA Weather Radio as*
3 *necessary.*

4 (b) *AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is*
5 *authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section*
6 *\$20,000,000 to remain available until expended.*

7 (c) *EXPANDING ACCESS.—As part of the activities in*
8 *this section, the Administrator shall acquire additional*
9 *transmitters as required to expand coverage to rural and*
10 *underserved communities, national parks, and recreation*
11 *areas.*

12 **SEC. 5. MODERNIZATION INITIATIVE.**

13 (a) *IN GENERAL.—In parallel to the activities under*
14 *section 4, the Administrator shall, to the maximum extent*
15 *practicable, enhance NOAA Weather Radio to ensure its ca-*
16 *pabilities and coverage remain valuable to the public. In*
17 *carrying out these activities, the Administrator shall—*

18 (1) *upgrade the telecommunications infrastruc-*
19 *ture to accelerate the transition of broadcasts to Inter-*
20 *net Protocol-based communications over non-copper*
21 *media;*

22 (2) *accelerate software upgrades to the Advanced*
23 *Weather Interactive Processing System, or the rel-*
24 *evant system successors, in order to implement par-*
25 *tial county notifications and alerts;*

1 (3) *consult with relevant stakeholders, including*
 2 *the private sector, to enhance accessibility and*
 3 *usability of NOAA Weather Radio data and feeds;*

4 (4) *develop options, including, but not limited*
 5 *to, satellite backup capability and commercial pro-*
 6 *vider partnerships for NOAA Weather Radio con-*
 7 *tinuity in the event of Weather Forecast Office out-*
 8 *ages;*

9 (5) *research and develop alternative options, in-*
 10 *cluding, but not limited to, microwave capabilities, to*
 11 *transmit NOAA Weather Radio signals to transmit-*
 12 *ters that are remote or do not have IP capability; and*

13 (6) *transition critical applications to the Inte-*
 14 *grated Dissemination Program, or the relevant pro-*
 15 *gram successors.*

16 (b) *PRIORITY.—In carrying out the objectives described*
 17 *in subsection (a), the Administrator shall prioritize prac-*
 18 *tices, capabilities, and technologies recommended by the as-*
 19 *essment in subsection (c), to maximize accessibility, par-*
 20 *ticularly in remote and underserved areas of the country.*

21 (c) *ASSESSMENT FOR MANAGEMENT AND DISTRIBUTION.—Not later than 12 months after the date of enact-*
 22 *ment of this Act, the Administrator shall complete an as-*
 23 *essment of access to NOAA Weather Radio. In conducting*
 24

1 *such an assessment, the Administrator shall take into con-*
2 *sideration and provide recommendations on—*

3 *(1) the need for continuous, adequate, and oper-*
4 *ational real-time broadcasts of the NOAA Weather*
5 *Radio in both urban and rural areas;*

6 *(2) solicited inputs from relevant stakeholders on*
7 *the compatibility of NOAA Weather Radio data for*
8 *third party platforms that provide online services,*
9 *such as websites and mobile device applications, or*
10 *deliver NOAA Weather Radio access;*

11 *(3) existing or new management systems, which*
12 *promote consistent, efficient, and compatible access to*
13 *NOAA Weather Radio;*

14 *(4) the ability of NOAA to aggregate real time*
15 *broadcast feeds at one or more central locations;*

16 *(5) effective interagency coordination;*

17 *(6) the potential effects of an electromagnetic*
18 *pulse or geomagnetic disturbance on NOAA Weather*
19 *Radio; and*

20 *(7) any other function the Administrator deems*
21 *necessary.*

22 *(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is*
23 *authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section*
24 *\$40,000,000 to remain available until expended.*

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