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To require the Secretary of the Interior to conduct an assessment to identify locations in National Parks in which there is the greatest need for broadband internet access service and areas in National Parks in which there is the greatest need for cellular service, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 15, 2023

Mr. BARRASSO (for himself, Mr. KING, Ms. LUMMIS, Mr. LEE, and Mrs. HYDE-SMITH) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

A BILL

To require the Secretary of the Interior to conduct an assessment to identify locations in National Parks in which there is the greatest need for broadband internet access service and areas in National Parks in which there is the greatest need for cellular service, 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 “Connect Our Parks
5 Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. BROADBAND INTERNET ACCESS SERVICE AND CEL-**
 2 **LULAR SERVICE ASSESSMENT AND PLAN-**
 3 **NING IN NATIONAL PARKS.**

4 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

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

8 (A) the Committee on Energy and Natural
 9 Resources of the Senate;

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

12 (C) the Committee on Natural Resources
 13 of the House of Representatives; and

14 (D) the Committee on Energy and Com-
 15 merce of the House of Representatives.

16 (2) BROADBAND INTERNET ACCESS SERVICE.—
 17 The term “broadband internet access service” has
 18 the meaning given the term in section 8.1(b) of title
 19 47, Code of Federal Regulations (or a successor reg-
 20 ulation).

21 (3) CELLULAR SERVICE.—The term “cellular
 22 service” has the meaning given the term in section
 23 22.99 of title 47, Code of Federal Regulations (or a
 24 successor regulation).

1 (4) NATIONAL PARK.—The term “National
2 Park” means a unit of the National Park System
3 that is designated as a National Park.

4 (5) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
5 the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Di-
6 rector of the National Park Service.

7 (b) ASSESSMENT.—

8 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days
9 after the date of enactment of this Act, the Sec-
10 retary shall complete an assessment of National
11 Parks to identify—

12 (A) 1 or more locations in each National
13 Park in which there is the greatest need for
14 broadband internet access service, based on the
15 considerations described in paragraph (2)(A);
16 and

17 (B) 1 or more areas in each National Park
18 in which there is the greatest need for cellular
19 service, based on the considerations described in
20 paragraph (2)(B).

21 (2) CONSIDERATIONS.—

22 (A) BROADBAND INTERNET ACCESS SERV-
23 ICE.—For purposes of identifying locations in
24 National Parks under paragraph (1)(A), the
25 Secretary shall consider, with respect to each

1 National Park, the availability of broadband
2 internet access service in—

3 (i) housing;

4 (ii) administrative facilities and re-
5 lated structures;

6 (iii) campgrounds; and

7 (iv) any other location within the Na-
8 tional Park in which broadband internet
9 access service is determined to be nec-
10 essary by the superintendent of the Na-
11 tional Park.

12 (B) CELLULAR SERVICE.—For purposes of
13 identifying areas in National Parks under para-
14 graph (1)(B), the Secretary shall consider, with
15 respect to each National Park, the availability
16 of cellular service in any area within the Na-
17 tional Park that would increase—

18 (i) the access of the public to emer-
19 gency services; or

20 (ii) the communications capabilities of
21 National Park Service employees.

22 (3) REPORT.—On completion of the assessment
23 under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall submit to
24 the appropriate committees of Congress, and make
25 available on the website of the Department of the

1 Interior, a report describing the results of the as-
2 sessment.

3 (c) PLAN.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years after
5 the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary
6 shall develop a plan, based on the results of the as-
7 sessment completed under subsection (b) and subject
8 to paragraph (4)—

9 (A) to install broadband internet access
10 service infrastructure in certain locations in Na-
11 tional Parks; and

12 (B) to install cellular service equipment
13 and infrastructure in certain areas of National
14 Parks.

15 (2) CONSULTATION.—In developing the plan
16 under paragraph (1), the Secretary—

17 (A) shall consult with local stakeholders
18 that the superintendent of the applicable Na-
19 tional Park determines to be necessary; and

20 (B) may consult with the superintendents
21 of any of the National Parks regarding plan de-
22 velopment methodologies.

23 (3) REQUIREMENTS.—The plan developed
24 under paragraph (1) shall—

25 (A) provide for—

1 (i) minimal viewshed impacts;

2 (ii) minimal disruptions to the land;

3 and

4 (iii) minimal disruptions to wildlife;

5 (B) provide for the use of public-private

6 partnerships—

7 (i) to install broadband internet ac-

8 cess service or cellular service equipment;

9 and

10 (ii) to provide broadband internet ac-

11 cess service or cellular service;

12 (C) be technology neutral; and

13 (D) in the case of broadband internet ac-

14 cess service, provide for broadband internet ac-

15 cess service of at least—

16 (i) a 100-Mbps downstream trans-

17 mission capacity; and

18 (ii) a 20-Mbps upstream transmission

19 capacity.

20 (4) LIMITATION.—Notwithstanding paragraph

21 (1), a plan developed under that paragraph shall not

22 be required to address broadband internet access

23 service or cellular service in any National Park with

24 respect to which the superintendent of the National

25 Park determines that there is adequate access to

- 1 broadband internet access service or cellular service,
- 2 as applicable.

