

119TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# H. R. 7405

To direct the Secretary of Energy to conduct a study on using highway rights-of-way and rail rights-of-way as locations on which to construct high-voltage transmission infrastructure, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 5, 2026

Mr. MULLIN introduced the following bill; which was referred to the  
Committee on Energy and Commerce

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## A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Energy to conduct a study on using highway rights-of-way and rail rights-of-way as locations on which to construct high-voltage transmission infrastructure, 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 “Rail and Highway  
5       Transmission Planning Act”.

6       **SEC. 2. SENSE OF CONGRESS; PURPOSE.**

7       (a) SENSE OF CONGRESS.—It is the sense of Con-  
8       gress that transportation rights-of-way, including highway

1 and rail rights-of-way, should be utilized in ways that  
2 serve the public interest, including accommodating new  
3 electric transmission infrastructure.

4 (b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this Act is to accel-  
5 erate the development of high-voltage transmission infra-  
6 structure by identifying opportunities to co-locate such  
7 projects within existing transportation rights-of-way, with  
8 the goal of alleviating energy capacity constraints and de-  
9 livering more affordable, reliable electricity for consumers.

10 **SEC. 3. STUDY ON PLACING HIGH-VOLTAGE TRANSMISSION**  
11 **INFRASTRUCTURE ON RAIL AND HIGHWAY**  
12 **RIGHTS-OF-WAYS.**

13 (a) STUDY.—The Secretary of Energy, in consulta-  
14 tion with the Secretary of Transportation, the Federal En-  
15 ergy Regulatory Commission, and each director of a Na-  
16 tional Laboratory determined relevant by the Secretary of  
17 Energy, shall conduct a study evaluating the potential  
18 benefits and challenges of using covered rights-of-way as  
19 locations on which to construct high-voltage transmission  
20 infrastructure.

21 (b) ELEMENTS.—In carrying out the study under  
22 subsection (a), the Secretary of Energy shall—

23 (1) conduct a review of projects completed or  
24 being carried out to develop high-voltage electric  
25 transmission infrastructure on a covered right-of-

1 way in the United States, including an assessment  
2 of any challenges with respect to safety, engineering,  
3 property rights, or other matters encountered while  
4 carrying out such projects and how each such chal-  
5 lenge was addressed;

6 (2) based on the results of the review under  
7 paragraph (1), determine best practices with respect  
8 to the planning, permitting, financing, and devel-  
9 oping of high-voltage electric transmission infra-  
10 structure on a covered right-of-way;

11 (3) generate, or consolidate from available  
12 sources, data on covered rights-of-way to evaluate  
13 the technical feasibility of building high-voltage  
14 transmission lines on each such covered right-of-way;

15 (4) using data generated or consolidated under  
16 paragraph (3), identify each covered right-of-way  
17 suitable for the construction of high-voltage trans-  
18 mission lines considering—

19 (A) with respect to the geographic region  
20 of each covered right-of-way evaluated, the need  
21 for transmission infrastructure to alleviate en-  
22 ergy transmission capacity constraints or con-  
23 gestion in the geographic region;

1 (B) the technical feasibility of building  
2 high-voltage transmission lines on each such  
3 covered right-of-way; and

4 (C) any other considerations determined  
5 appropriate by the Secretary;

6 (5) with respect to each covered right-of-way  
7 identified under paragraph (4)—

8 (A) evaluate the suitability of various high-  
9 voltage transmission configurations, accounting  
10 for the infrastructure needs of each such con-  
11 figuration, including—

- 12 (i) high-voltage alternating current;  
13 (ii) high-voltage direct current;  
14 (iii) point-to-point high-voltage direct  
15 current;  
16 (iv) multi-terminal bi-directional high-  
17 voltage direct current systems;  
18 (v) overhead lines;  
19 (vi) underground lines; and  
20 (vii) any other relevant configuration,  
21 as determined by the Secretary;

22 (B) identify and examine any potential  
23 challenges unique to transmission development  
24 in the covered right-of-way;

1           (C) determine the costs and benefits of  
2           constructing high-voltage transmission infra-  
3           structure in the covered right-of-way, including  
4           any cost or time savings expected to be realized  
5           with respect to land acquisition or obtaining  
6           any requisite permits, and compare such costs  
7           and benefits to the average costs and benefits  
8           of constructing similar high-voltage trans-  
9           mission infrastructure on lands that are not a  
10          covered right-of-way;

11          (D) identify—

12               (i) any potential funding mechanisms  
13               and financing opportunities available for  
14               entities to use for the construction of high-  
15               voltage transmission infrastructure on the  
16               right-of-way; and

17               (ii) any potential financial benefits for  
18               stakeholders in such construction, includ-  
19               ing owners of property abutting the right-  
20               of-way or otherwise implicated by the con-  
21               struction; and

22          (E) analyze how, if at all, the construction  
23          of high-voltage transmission infrastructure on  
24          the covered right-of-way is likely to support im-  
25          provements in grid reliability, streamline the

1 interconnection queue, increase energy trans-  
2 mission capacity, contribute to reduced energy  
3 costs for energy consumers, and improve high-  
4 way or rail safety and efficiency;

5 (6) evaluate the effects, if any, of constructing  
6 and operating high-voltage transmission lines on cov-  
7 ered rights-of-way on the environment, railroad oper-  
8 ations, and communities near the right-of-way, in-  
9 cluding—

10 (A) electromagnetic interference with rail  
11 safety, rail signaling equipment, and rail com-  
12 munication equipment; and

13 (B) the potential for safety or operational  
14 interference while performing maintenance, re-  
15 habilitation work, or expansion of transpor-  
16 tation infrastructure on covered rights-of-way;

17 (7) develop—

18 (A) an interagency action plan with respect  
19 to the construction and operation of high-volt-  
20 age transmission lines on covered rights-of-way;  
21 and

22 (B) for use facilitating the construction of  
23 high-voltage transmission infrastructure on a  
24 covered right-of-way, resources for use by—

1 (i) Federal, State, and local govern-  
2 mental agencies; and

3 (ii) utilities, railroad carriers, and  
4 other relevant stakeholders, as identified  
5 by the Secretary; and

6 (8) consult utilities, railroad carriers, and any  
7 relevant stakeholders, as identified by the Secretary.

8 (c) PUBLICATION.—

9 (1) ROLLING PUBLICATION OF STUDY ELE-  
10 MENTS.—As soon as is practicable after each ele-  
11 ment of the study described in subsection (b) is com-  
12 plete, the Secretary shall publish the results of the  
13 element and any data developed or consolidated in  
14 the completion of the element.

15 (2) REPORT.—Not later than 3 years after the  
16 date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall—

17 (A) submit to Congress a report detailing  
18 the results of the study under subsection (a),  
19 including all data underpinning such results,  
20 which shall be presented in a machine-readable  
21 format; and

22 (B) publish such report and such data.

23 (3) FORM.—All information, data, and reports  
24 published pursuant to this subsection—

1 (A) shall be published on a publicly acces-  
 2 sible website of the Department of Energy; and

3 (B) may be published with redactions of  
 4 any data the publication of which the Secretary  
 5 determine poses a national security risk.

6 (d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

7 (1) COVERED RIGHT-OF-WAY.—The term “cov-  
 8 ered right-of-way” means—

9 (A) a highway right-of-way, including a  
 10 right-of-way of a State highway and a right-of-  
 11 way of the National Highway System; or

12 (B) a rail right-of-way, including a right-  
 13 of-way of an abandoned railroad.

14 (2) HIGHWAY; NATIONAL HIGHWAY SYSTEM.—  
 15 The terms “highway” and “National Highway Sys-  
 16 tem” have the meanings given such terms, respec-  
 17 tively, in section 101 of title 23, United States Code.

18 (3) NATIONAL LABORATORY.—The term “Na-  
 19 tional Laboratory” has the meaning given the term  
 20 in section 2 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (42  
 21 U.S.C. 15801).

22 (4) RAILROAD CARRIER.—The term “railroad  
 23 carrier” has the meaning given such term in section  
 24 20102 of title 49, United States Code.

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