

EXPANDING APPALACHIA’S BROADBAND ACCESS ACT

MARCH 20, 2026.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. GRAVES, from the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany H.R. 2474]

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 2474) to require the Comptroller General of the United States to conduct a study on the capability of the Appalachian Regional Commission to include low-orbit satellites in broadband projects, and for other purposes, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon with amendments and recommends that the bill as amended do pass.

CONTENTS

	Page
Purpose of Legislation	2
Background and Need for Legislation	2
Hearings	3
Legislative History and Consideration	3
Committee Votes	3
Committee Oversight Findings and Recommendations	4
New Budget Authority and Tax Expenditures	4
Congressional Budget Office Cost Estimate	4
Performance Goals and Objectives	5
Duplication of Federal Programs	5
Congressional Earmarks, Limited Tax Benefits, and Limited Tariff Benefits ...	5
Federal Mandates Statement	5
Preemption Clarification	5
Advisory Committee Statement	5
Applicability to Legislative Branch	5
Section-by-Section Analysis of the Legislation	5
Changes in Existing Law Made by the Bill, as Reported	6

The amendments are as follows:

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Expanding Appalachia’s Broadband Access Act”.

SEC. 2 GAO STUDY ON SATELLITE BROADBAND.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this section, the Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct, and submit to Congress the results thereof, a study on the capability of the Appalachian Regional Commission to incorporate satellites in broadband projects.

(b) **REQUIREMENTS.**—In conducting the study under subsection (a), the Comptroller General shall—

(1) review the capacity of satellite broadband services to be used for business purposes;

(2) evaluate economic development growth in areas that have used satellite broadband for businesses; and

(3) analyze the cost-effectiveness of implementing broadband via satellites for economic development.

Amend the title so as to read:

A bill to require the Comptroller General of the United States to conduct a study on the capability of the Appalachian Regional Commission to include satellites in broadband projects, and for other purposes.

PURPOSE OF LEGISLATION

The purpose of H.R. 2474, the “*Expanding Appalachia’s Broadband Access Act*,” as amended, is to require the Comptroller General of the United States to conduct a study on the capability of the Appalachian Regional Commission to include satellites in broadband projects, and for other purposes.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

The *Appalachian Regional Development Act of 1965*, which established the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), was enacted during a time prior to the need for broadband connectivity to support economic development.¹ Since then, that Act has been updated to explicitly provide the ARC authority to support broadband projects in distressed communities in the Appalachian region.²

In recent years, satellite technology has been increasingly used to provide broadband service, especially in rural and remote areas where deploying fiber cabling has been more challenging. High-speed internet service, also known as broadband, can be provided through the traditional wired methods or by using wireless technology such as mobile networks and satellites.³

Satellite technology has become increasingly viable and used to overcome some of the challenges to deploying wired broadband service, especially in rural areas with smaller populations and challenging terrain, including mountain ranges such as those that exist in the Appalachia region.⁴

H.R. 2474, as amended, would direct the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to conduct a study on the capability of the

¹ 40 U.S.C. § 14101 et seq.

² See, e.g., 40 U.S.C. § 14509.

³ COLBY LEIGH PECHTOL, CONG. RSCH. SERV. (R46896), LOW EARTH ORBIT SATELLITES: POTENTIAL TO ADDRESS THE BROADBAND DIGITAL DIVIDE, (Nov. 14, 2025), available at <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R46896>.

⁴ *Id.*

ARC to incorporate satellite technology in broadband projects. More specifically, the GAO is directed to review the capacity of the satellite broadband to be used for business purposes; evaluate the economic development growth in areas that have used satellite broadband; and evaluate the cost-effectiveness of satellite broadband for economic development.

HEARINGS

For the purposes of rule XIII, clause 3(c)(6)(A) of the 119th Congress, the following hearing was used to develop or consider H.R. 2474:

On January 22, 2026, the Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure held a hearing entitled, “*Smarter Spending, Stronger Results: Reducing Duplication and Ensuring Effectiveness Through Economic Development Reforms.*” The Subcommittee received testimony from Mr. Ben Page, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Economic Development, and Chief Operating Officer, United States Economic Development Administration; The Honorable Gayle Conelly Manchin, Federal Co-Chair, Appalachian Regional Commission; The Honorable Corey Wiggins, Federal Co-Chair, Delta Regional Authority; The Honorable Chris Saunders, Federal Co-Chair, Northern Border Regional Commission; The Honorable Jennifer Clyburn Reed, Federal Co-Chair, Southeast Crescent Regional Commission; The Honorable Juan Sanchez, Federal Co-Chair, Southwest Border Regional Commission; Ms. Jocelyn Fenton, Director of Programs, Denali Commission.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY AND CONSIDERATION

H.R. 2474 was introduced in the United States House of Representatives on March 27, 2025, by Mr. Taylor of Ohio and referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. Within the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, H.R. 2474 was referred to the Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management. The Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management was discharged from further consideration of H.R. 2474 on January 21, 2026.

The Committee considered H.R. 2474 on January 21, 2026, and ordered the measure to be reported to the House with a favorable recommendation, amendment, by voice vote.

The following amendment was offered:

An Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute to H.R. 2474, offered by Mr. Taylor of Ohio was AGREED TO by voice vote.

COMMITTEE VOTES

Clause 3(b) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives requires each committee report to include the total number of votes cast for and against on each record vote on a motion to report and on any amendment offered to the measure or matter, and the names of those members voting for and against.

No record votes were requested during consideration of H.R. 2474.

COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

With respect to the requirements of clause 3(c)(1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee's oversight findings and recommendations are reflected in this report.

NEW BUDGET AUTHORITY AND TAX EXPENDITURES

Clause 3(c)(2) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives does not apply where a cost estimate and comparison prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office under section 402 of the *Congressional Budget Act of 1974* has been timely submitted prior to the filing of the report and is included in the report. Such a cost estimate is included in this report.

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

With respect to the requirement of clause 3(c)(3) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives and section 402 of the *Congressional Budget Act of 1974*, the Committee has received the enclosed cost estimate for H.R. 2474 from the Director of the Congressional Budget Office:

H.R. 2474, Expanding Appalachia's Broadband Access Act			
As ordered reported by the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure on January 21, 2026			
By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars	2026	2026-2031	2026-2036
Direct Spending (Outlays)	0	0	0
Revenues	0	0	0
Increase or Decrease (-) in the Deficit	0	0	0
Spending Subject to Appropriation (Outlays)	*	*	not estimated
Increases <i>net direct spending</i> in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2037?	No	Statutory pay-as-you-go procedures apply?	No
		Mandate Effects	
Increases <i>on-budget deficits</i> in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2037?	No	Contains intergovernmental mandate?	No
		Contains private-sector mandate?	No
* = between zero and \$500,000.			

H.R. 2474 would require the Government Accountability Office to report to the Congress on whether the Appalachian Regional Commission could incorporate satellite technology in its broadband projects.

Based on the cost of similar reports, CBO estimates that implementing the bill would cost less than \$500,000 over the 2026–2031 period. Any related spending would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is David Hughes. The estimate was reviewed by H. Samuel Papenfuss, Deputy Director of Budget Analysis.

PHILLIP L. SWAGEL,
Director, Congressional Budget Office.

PERFORMANCE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

With respect to the requirement of clause 3(c)(4) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the performance goal and objective of this legislation is to direct the Comptroller General of the United States to study the capability of the Appalachian Regional Commission to incorporate satellite broadband in economic development projects.

DUPLICATION OF FEDERAL PROGRAMS

Pursuant to clause 3(c)(5) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee finds that no provision of H.R. 2474 establishes or reauthorizes a program of the Federal government known to be duplicative of another Federal program, a program that was included in any report from the Government Accountability Office to Congress pursuant to section 21 of Public Law 111–139, or a program related to a program identified in the most recent Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance.

CONGRESSIONAL EARMARKS, LIMITED TAX BENEFITS,
AND LIMITED TARIFF BENEFITS

In compliance with clause 9 of rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, this bill, as reported, contains no Congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9(e), 9(f), or 9(g) of the rule XXI.

FEDERAL MANDATES STATEMENT

The Committee adopts as its own the estimate of Federal mandates prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office pursuant to section 423 of the *Unfunded Mandates Reform Act* (Public Law 104–4).

PREEMPTION CLARIFICATION

Section 423 of the *Congressional Budget Act of 1974* requires the report of any Committee on a bill or joint resolution to include a statement on the extent to which the bill or joint resolution is intended to preempt state, local, or tribal law. The Committee finds that H.R. 2474 does not preempt any state, local, or tribal law.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE STATEMENT

No advisory committees within the definition of Section 5(b) of the appendix to Title 5, United States Code, are created by this legislation.

APPLICABILITY TO LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

The Committee finds that the legislation does not relate to the terms and conditions of employment or access to public services or accommodations within the meaning of section 102(b)(3) of the *Congressional Accountability Act* (Public Law 104–1).

SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS OF THE LEGISLATION

Section 1. Short title

This section requires cites the bill as the “Expanding Appalachia’s Broadband Access Act”.

Section 2. GAO study on satellite broadband

This section directs that no later than one year after the date of enactment, the Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a study on the capability of the Appalachian Regional Commission to incorporate satellites in broadband projects.

This section directs that, in conducting the study, the Comptroller General reviews the capacity of satellite broadband services to be used for business purposes; evaluate economic development growth in areas that have used satellite broadband for businesses; and analyze the cost-effectiveness of implementing broadband via satellites for economic development.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW MADE BY THE BILL, AS REPORTED

As reported by the Committee, H.R. 2474 makes no changes in existing law.

