

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 277

To establish a Rural Telecommunications and Broadband Advisory Committee within the Federal Communications Commission.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 2, 2017

Mr. MANCHIN introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

A BILL

To establish a Rural Telecommunications and Broadband Advisory Committee within the Federal Communications Commission.

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 “Rural Telecommuni-
5 cations and Broadband Service Act of 2017”.

6 **SEC. 2. RURAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND BROADBAND**
7 **ADVISORY COMMITTEE.**

8 Title I of the Communications Act of 1934 (47
9 U.S.C. 151 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the
10 following:

1 **“SEC. 13. RURAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND BROADBAND**
2 **ADVISORY COMMITTEE.**

3 “(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established within
4 the Commission the Rural Telecommunications and
5 Broadband Advisory Committee (in this section referred
6 to as the ‘Committee’).

7 “(b) PURPOSE.—The Committee shall—

8 “(1) provide advice to the Commission and re-
9 ports to Congress with respect to policy issues relat-
10 ing to telecommunications services in rural areas, in-
11 cluding advice and recommendations that would—

12 “(A) promote the deployment of advanced
13 and next-generation telecommunications serv-
14 ices in rural areas; and

15 “(B) advance the principles described in
16 section 254(b); and

17 “(2) advise the Commission with respect to the
18 impact that agenda items of the Commission could
19 have on the provision of telecommunications services
20 in rural areas.

21 “(c) MEMBERSHIP.—

22 “(1) NUMBER OF MEMBERS.—The Committee
23 shall be composed of not fewer than 5 and not more
24 than 30 members.

25 “(2) APPOINTMENT.—The members of the
26 Committee, other than the co-Chairs described in

1 paragraph (6), shall be appointed by the chairman
 2 of the Commission with the concurrence of the sen-
 3 ior commissioner of the Commission from the party
 4 of which the chairman is not a member.

5 “(3) REMOVAL.—A member of the Committee
 6 may be removed only upon the concurrence of both
 7 the chairman of the Commission and the senior com-
 8 missioner of the Commission from the party of
 9 which the chairman is not a member.

10 “(4) TERMS.—Each member of the Committee
 11 appointed under paragraph (2)—

12 “(A) shall serve for a term of 2 years; and

13 “(B) may be reappointed for additional
 14 terms.

15 “(5) REPRESENTATION OF MEMBERSHIP.—The
 16 membership of the Committee shall—

17 “(A) be balanced with respect to the func-
 18 tions that the members of the Committee per-
 19 form; and

20 “(B) represent a cross-section of interests
 21 in rural telecommunications policy, including in-
 22 dividuals—

23 “(i)(I) with expertise in spectrum
 24 management and efficiency in rural areas;
 25 or

1 “(II) who have provided policy rec-
2 ommendations with respect to advancing
3 the principles described in section 254(b),
4 including, to ensure that next-generation
5 telecommunications services are deployed
6 in rural areas in a timely manner, experi-
7 ence in—

8 “(aa) offering recommendations;

9 “(bb) conducting studies, re-
10 search, or reforms; and

11 “(cc) establishing new or novel
12 approaches to policy or spectrum
13 usage or licensing; and

14 “(ii) who have—

15 “(I) represented—

16 “(aa) telecommunications
17 providers that serve rural areas;

18 “(bb) technology developers
19 and manufacturers;

20 “(cc) Federal, State, re-
21 gional, and local interests;

22 “(dd) national security in-
23 terests; or

24 “(ee) entities that seek to
25 protect consumers; or

1 “(II) worked in—

2 “(aa) academia; or

3 “(bb) the field of public
4 safety.

5 “(6) CO-CHAIRS.—

6 “(A) APPOINTMENT.—The chairman of the
7 Commission and the senior commissioner of the
8 Commission from the party of which the chair-
9 man is not a member shall each appoint a co-
10 Chair of the Committee.

11 “(B) REMOVAL.—Each co-Chair of the
12 Committee may be removed only upon the con-
13 currence of both the chairman of the Commis-
14 sion and the senior commissioner of the Com-
15 mission from the party of which the chairman
16 is not a member.

17 “(d) MEETINGS.—The Committee—

18 “(1) shall meet not less frequently than once
19 every 4 months; and

20 “(2) may meet more frequently than as de-
21 scribed in paragraph (1), as determined by the co-
22 Chairs.

23 “(e) REPORTS.—

24 “(1) ANNUAL REPORT.—The Committee shall
25 submit to the Commission, the Committee on Com-

merce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate,
and the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the
House of Representatives an annual report that de-
scribes the activities of the Committee during the
preceding year.

“(2) SERVICING RURAL AREAS.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year
after the date of enactment of this section, the
Committee shall submit to the Commission, the
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Trans-
portation of the Senate, and the Committee on
Energy and Commerce of the House of Rep-
resentatives a report that defines, in accordance
with the principles described in section 254(b),
what constitutes a rural area that has access to
telecommunications and information tech-
nologies and services.

“(B) UPDATES.—The Committee may up-
date the report submitted under subparagraph
(A), as the co-Chairs determine is appropriate.

“(f) ADVICE ON AGENDA ITEMS.—The Committee
may be called before the Commission to consider the im-
pact of agenda items of the Commission on the provision
of telecommunications services in rural areas.

“(g) EXPENSES.—

1 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Members of the Committee
2 shall not receive compensation, travel expenses, or a
3 per diem for the work of the members of the Com-
4 mittee.

5 “(2) USE OF ELECTRONIC MEANS.—The Com-
6 mittee shall use telecommunications services and
7 electronic resources to the maximum extent possible
8 to—

9 “(A) facilitate the work of the Committee;
10 and

11 “(B) minimize the expenses incurred by
12 the members of the Committee in performing
13 the work of the Committee.

14 “(h) APPLICABILITY OF FACA.—Sections 10 and 14
15 of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.)
16 shall not apply to the Committee or the activities of the
17 Committee.”.

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