

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1515

To direct the Federal Communications Commission to promulgate regulations that establish a national standard for determining whether mobile and broadband services available in rural areas are reasonably comparable to those services provided in urban areas.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 16, 2019

Ms. HASSAN (for herself and Mrs. CAPITO) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

A BILL

To direct the Federal Communications Commission to promulgate regulations that establish a national standard for determining whether mobile and broadband services available in rural areas are reasonably comparable to those services provided in urban areas.

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 Reasonable and
5 Comparable Wireless Access Act of 2019”.

1 **SEC. 2. AVAILABILITY OF MOBILE BROADBAND SERVICE IN**
2 **UNDERSERVED RURAL AREAS.**

3 (a) DEFINITIONS.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—In this section:

5 (A) COMMISSION.—The term “Commis-
6 sion” means the Federal Communications Com-
7 mission.

8 (B) RURAL TELEPHONE COMPANY.—The
9 term “rural telephone company” has the mean-
10 ing given the term in section 3 of the Commu-
11 nications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 153).

12 (C) SERVICE AREA.—The term “service
13 area” has the meaning given the term in sec-
14 tion 214(e) of the Communications Act of 1934
15 (47 U.S.C. 214(e)).

16 (2) MOBILE BROADBAND SERVICE.—The Com-
17 mission shall define the term “mobile broadband
18 service” for purposes of this section.

19 (b) ESTABLISHMENT OF STANDARD.—

20 (1) COMMENCEMENT OF RULEMAKING.—Not
21 later than 180 days after the date of enactment of
22 this Act, the Commission shall commence a rule-
23 making to establish a national standard to deter-
24 mine, with respect to access to universal service in
25 rural, insular, and high cost areas under section
26 254(b)(3) of the Communications Act of 1934 (47

1 U.S.C. 254(b)(3)), whether mobile broadband service
2 available in rural areas is reasonably comparable to
3 mobile broadband service provided in urban areas.

4 (2) PROGRESS REPORTS.—Not less frequently
5 than once every 180 days after commencing the
6 rulemaking under paragraph (1), the Commission
7 shall submit to Congress a report on the progress of
8 the Commission in establishing the standard under
9 that paragraph.

10 (c) CONSIDERATIONS.—In establishing a standard
11 under subsection (b), the Commission shall consider—

12 (1) defining a rural area as any area—

13 (A) in which a school or library designated
14 as “rural” under section 54.505(b)(3)(i) of title
15 47, Code of Federal Regulations, as in effect on
16 the date of enactment of this Act, is located; or

17 (B) that is a service area that is served by
18 a rural telephone company;

19 (2) defining a rural area as underserved, with
20 respect to mobile broadband service, if mobile
21 broadband service that meets or exceeds the stand-
22 ard established under subsection (b) is not available
23 in the area; and

24 (3) providing that a rural area shall be consid-
25 ered underserved, with respect to mobile broadband

1 service, if tests show that the average speed and sig-
2 nal strength of mobile broadband service available in
3 the area do not meet or exceed the average speed
4 and signal strength of mobile broadband service pro-
5 vided in the 20 most populous metropolitan statis-
6 tical areas in the United States.

7 (d) DATA FROM URBAN AREAS.—To help inform the
8 standard established under subsection (b), the Commis-
9 sion shall gather, and periodically update, data on mobile
10 broadband service provided in the 20 most populous met-
11 ropolitan statistical areas in the United States.

○