

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SUBRAMANYAM. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 390, the Advanced Capabilities for Emergency Response Operations Act, or ACERO Act.

Destructive wildfires threaten human lives and communities around the country. Just over 1 year ago, the devastating Eaton and Palisades fires in southern California killed 31 people and caused tens of billions of dollars in damage.

In 2025, the U.S. experienced nearly 78,000 wildfires that burned more than 5 million acres. One tool we can use to prevent, mitigate, and respond to wildfires is aviation. Crewed aircraft have long been used to monitor and fight fires. Now, advanced aviation technologies and uncrewed aerial systems can advance our response to wildfires.

It is important now more than ever that crewed and uncrewed aircraft work together safely alongside ground operations. That means sharing and coordinating real-time operations information between aircraft, drone operators, and ground crews across multiple government agencies.

Here is where NASA and ACERO come in. NASA has done further research, development, and demonstration work, to use its tools and technologies for specific public safety applications, including wildfire response. The success of an initial pilot program led NASA to launch the Advanced Capabilities for Emergency Response Operations project, or ACERO.

This legislation would formally codify the research and development efforts under ACERO in law. This bill directs NASA to conduct research and development activities to improve aerial responses to wildfires.

Additionally, NASA would be authorized under this bill to conduct research in areas including advanced aircraft technologies and airspace management, information sharing and real-time data exchange, and the development of an interagency coordination platform.

We need to ensure our first responders have access to the most advanced tools to respond to wildfires. This bill supports using NASA's brightest minds and cutting-edge technologies to support the safety of our communities. The ACERO Act will enable safer, more effective aerial operations for Federal, State, and local efforts on the front lines of wildfire management and response.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues, Mr. FONG and Ms. MCCLELLAN, for their work on this bill. I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on H.R. 390, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Mr. Speaker, the ACERO Act promotes the development of advanced

technologies to strengthen our wildfire response efforts. NASA should leverage its unique aeronautics expertise to improve the emergency operations involving aerial assets. ACERO seeks to enhance situational awareness, coordination, and information sharing among aerial platforms, both piloted and unmanned. This bill recognizes the important work already underway and encourages NASA to continue advancing these efforts.

Again, I thank Representatives FONG and MCCLELLAN for their bipartisan leadership.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BABIN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 390, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: "A bill to utilize the Advanced Capabilities for Emergency Response to Operations project of NASA to improve aerial responses to wildfires, and for other purposes."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ACCESSING SATELLITE CAPABILITIES TO ENABLE NEW DISCOVERIES ACT

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2600) to require the Administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to establish a program to identify, evaluate, acquire, and disseminate commercial Earth remote sensing data and imagery in order to satisfy the scientific, operational, and educational requirements of the Administration, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2600

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Accessing Satellite Capabilities to Enable New Discoveries Act" or the "ASCEND Act".

SEC. 2. COMMERCIAL SATELLITE DATA.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Section 60501 of title 51, United States Code, states that the goal for the Earth Science program of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (referred to in this section as "NASA") shall be to pursue a program of Earth observations, research, and applications activities to better understand the Earth, how it supports life, and how human activities affect its ability to do so in the future.

(2) Section 50115 of title 51, United States Code, states that the Administrator of NASA shall, to the extent possible and while satisfying the scientific or educational requirements of NASA, and where appropriate, of other Federal agencies and scientific re-

searchers, acquire, where cost effective, space-based and airborne commercial Earth remote sensing data, services, distribution, and applications from a commercial provider.

(3) The Administrator of NASA established the Commercial SmallSat Data Acquisition Pilot Program in 2019 to identify, validate, and acquire from commercial sources data that support the Earth science research and application goals.

(4) The Administrator of NASA has—

(A) determined that the pilot program described in paragraph (3) has been a success, as described in the final evaluation entitled "Commercial SmallSat Data Acquisition Program Pilot Evaluation Report" issued in 2020;

(B) established a formal process for evaluating and onboarding new commercial vendors in such pilot program;

(C) increased the number of commercial vendors and commercial data products available through such pilot program; and

(D) expanded procurement arrangements with commercial vendors to broaden user access to provide commercial Earth remote sensing data and imagery to federally funded researchers.

(b) COMMERCIAL SATELLITE DATA ACQUISITION PROGRAM.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 603 of title 51, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

"§ 60307. Commercial satellite data acquisition program

"(a) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall establish within the Earth Science Division of the Science Mission Directorate a program to acquire and disseminate cost-effective and appropriate commercial Earth remote sensing data and imagery in order to satisfy the scientific, operational, and educational requirements of the Administration, and where appropriate, of other Federal agencies and scientific researchers to augment or complement the suite of Earth observations acquired by the Administration, other United States Government agencies, and international partners.

"(b) DATA PUBLICATION AND TRANSPARENCY.—The terms and conditions of commercial Earth remote sensing data and imagery acquisitions under the program described in subsection (a) shall not prevent—

"(1) the publication of commercial data or imagery for scientific purposes; or

"(2) the publication of information that is derived from, incorporates, or enhances the original commercial data or imagery of a vendor.

"(c) AUTHORIZATION.—In carrying out the program under this section, the Administrator may—

"(1) procure commercial Earth remote sensing data and imagery from commercial vendors to advance scientific research and applications in accordance with subsection (a); and

"(2) establish or modify end-use license terms and conditions to allow for the widest possible use of procured commercial Earth remote sensing data and imagery by individuals other than NASA-funded users, consistent with the goals of the program.

"(d) UNITED STATES VENDORS.—Commercial Earth remote sensing data and imagery referred to in subsections (a) and (c) shall, to the maximum extent practicable, be procured from United States vendors.

"(e) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this section and annually thereafter, the Administrator shall submit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives

a report that includes the following information regarding the agreements, vendors, license terms, and uses of commercial Earth remote sensing data and imagery under this section:

“(1)(A) In the case of the initial report, a list of all agreements that are providing commercial Earth remote sensing data and imagery to NASA as of the date of the report.

“(B) For each subsequent report, a list of all agreements that have provided commercial Earth remote sensing data and imagery to NASA during the reporting period.

“(2) A description of the end-use license terms and conditions for each such vendor.

“(3) A description of the manner in which each such agreement is advancing scientific research and applications, including priorities recommended by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine decadal surveys.

“(4) Information specifying whether the Administrator has entered into an agreement with a commercial vendor or a Federal agency that permits the use of data and imagery by Federal Government employees, contractors, or non-Federal users.”.

(2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents for chapter 603 of title 51, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new item:

“60307. Commercial satellite data acquisition program.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BABIN) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SUBRAMANYAM) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

□ 1610

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 2600, the bill that is now under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2600, the ASCEND Act, sponsored by Representatives HURD and BONAMICI.

Commercial remote sensing is an increasingly important part of the growing space economy. In recent years, technological advancements and lower launch costs have enabled American companies to expand their remote sensing capabilities and to deliver innovative, high-quality satellite data at competitive prices.

Recognizing this potential, NASA established a pilot program in 2017 to assess how the agency could leverage commercial satellite data to support mission objectives.

Through this effort, NASA gained valuable experience working directly with the commercial sector. The agency evaluated available satellite data, explored how it could advance scientific research and applications, and developed acquisition approaches that allowed for appropriate government use and dissemination.

The pilot program demonstrated that commercially provided datasets can effectively complement NASA's existing capabilities. The ASCEND Act builds on that success by authorizing the Commercial Satellite Data Acquisition program within NASA's Science Mission Directorate.

This legislation ensures that NASA can continue to evaluate, access, and utilize cost-effective, cutting-edge commercial data to advance its scientific research and applications. At the same time, it supports the growth of the space economy and strengthens the United States leadership in space.

I thank Representatives HURD and BONAMICI for their bipartisan work to bring this bill to the House floor.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support the ASCEND Act, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SUBRAMANYAM. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the ASCEND Act. The bill would codify the successful Commercial Satellite Data Acquisition pilot program.

The data acquired from the pilot project was shown to complement Earth observations from NASA's fleet of satellites and instruments. NASA has continued these activities as the Commercial SmallSat Data Acquisition Pilot Program.

This bill also allows us to acquire commercial Earth remote sensing data and imagery from vendors. The bill also includes provisions to support data publication, transparency, and reports to Congress, and to ensure the widest possible use of the data procured under the program consistent with program goals.

This bill supports both science and our commercial remote sensing industry, such as companies in my home Commonwealth of Virginia, by augmenting scientific research with additional sources of data and leveraging commercial capabilities.

I thank the bill's sponsors for their work on the ASCEND Act and encourage my colleagues to support this legislation, as well.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. HURD).

Mr. HURD of Colorado. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of my legislation, H.R. 2600, the Accessing Satellite Capabilities to Enable New Discoveries Act, the ASCEND Act.

This bill builds on a model that already works. In 2017, NASA launched the Commercial Small Satellite Data Acquisition Pilot Program to test whether commercially available Earth observation data could support NASA's scientific missions. The results were clear: Participating scientists found the data reliable, valuable, and highly effective across a broad range of research applications.

The ASCEND Act takes that successful pilot and makes it permanent. It di-

rects NASA to formally establish a commercial satellite acquisition program within the Science Mission Directorate so that the agency can routinely access cost-effective commercial data to complement its own Earth observation missions.

This is a practical approach. Instead of duplicating capabilities, NASA can leverage private-sector innovation. Through commercial licensing, researchers gain access to high-quality satellite data that supports wildfire response, agricultural monitoring, disaster preparedness, reforestation, and environmental tracking. That data translates directly into better decisionmaking on the ground.

This is a model where private investment strengthens public missions, and it supports American jobs, including in Colorado's growing commercial space sector.

The bill also includes appropriate oversight. It requires an annual report to Congress detailing the data acquired, its sources, how it is used within NASA, as well as its measurable impact. That transparency ensures accountability while allowing the program to grow.

At a time when commercial space innovation is accelerating rapidly, Congress should ensure NASA has the flexibility to use the best tools available. The ASCEND Act strengthens America's scientific leadership, supports our domestic space industry, and ensures taxpayer dollars are used efficiently.

I thank Chairman BABIN for advancing my bill to the floor. I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2600.

Mr. SUBRAMANYAM. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues, Mr. HURD and Ms. BONAMICI, for their work on this legislation. It is a great bill. I am a cosponsor myself. I urge my colleagues to vote “yes” on H.R. 2600, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Mr. Speaker, over the past two decades, the United States commercial space sector has experienced significant growth and maturity.

The Commercial Satellite Data Acquisition pilot program that NASA launched in 2017 is one example of how the agency has embraced this evolution.

By enabling the continued acquisition of commercial satellite data, the ASCEND Act will complement NASA's scientific efforts and ensure that the agency has access to the innovative capabilities being developed by America's commercial space sector. The ability to procure this data will strengthen U.S. leadership in the global space industry.

Again, I thank Representatives HURD, KEAN, and BONAMICI for their work on this important legislation. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BABIN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2600, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SMALL BUSINESS ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ADVANCEMENT ACT

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3679) to require the Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology to develop resources for small businesses in utilizing artificial intelligence, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3679

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Small Business Artificial Intelligence Advancement Act".

SEC. 2. RESOURCES FOR SMALL BUSINESSES TO UTILIZE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE.

Section 22A of the National Institute of Standards and Technology Act (15 U.S.C. 278h-1) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsection (h) as subsection (i); and

(2) by inserting after subsection (g) the following new subsection:

"(h) DEVELOPMENT OF RESOURCES FOR SMALL BUSINESSES IN UTILIZING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the availability of appropriations, the Director shall, in carrying out subsection (a), develop or identify, and disseminate (in accordance with paragraph (4)), resources for small business concerns (as such term is defined in section 3 of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 632)) relating to artificial intelligence. Such resources may include technical standards, best practices, benchmarks, methodologies, procedures, or processes for the understanding, adoption, or integration of artificial intelligence.

"(2) REQUIREMENTS.—The Director shall ensure that the resources described in paragraph (1) satisfy the following:

"(A) Are generally applicable and usable by a wide range of small business concerns.

"(B) Include elements that promote basic understanding, identification, and adoption of proper use cases of artificial intelligence.

"(C) Include case studies of practical application across a range of business sizes and types.

"(D) Are technology-neutral and relevant to technologies that are accessible and suitable for small businesses.

"(E) Are based on international voluntary standards as applicable, and are consistent with the Stevenson-Wydler Technology Innovation Act of 1980 (15 U.S.C. 3701 et seq.).

"(F) Include recommendations and references to existing Federal educational resources, including the risk management framework under subsection (c), privacy and cybersecurity risk management frameworks established by the Institute, and activities relating to the national cybersecurity awareness and education program under section 303 of the Cybersecurity Enhancement Act of 2014 (15 U.S.C. 7443).

"(3) REVIEW AND UPDATE OF RESOURCES.—Not later than two years after the date of the enact-

ment of this subsection and not less frequently than once every two years thereafter, the Director shall carry out the following:

"(A) Review the resources described in paragraph (1).

"(B) Update such resources as the Director considers appropriate.

"(4) DISSEMINATION AND USE OF TRAINING RESOURCES.—The Director shall coordinate with the Administrator of the Small Business Administration regarding the distribution and use through the resource partners of the Small Business Administration of the resources described in paragraph (1).

"(5) VOLUNTARY RESOURCES.—The use of the resources described in paragraph (1) shall be considered voluntary.

"(6) REPORT.—

"(A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than four years after the date of the enactment of this subsection, the Director shall submit to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report on the development, identification, dissemination, and use of the resources described in paragraph (1), including updates made pursuant to paragraph (3).

"(B) CONTENTS.—The report under subparagraph (A) shall include the following:

"(i) A list of the resources described in paragraph (1), including updates made pursuant to paragraph (3).

"(ii) Relevant feedback from recipients of such resources, and disseminators of such resources pursuant to paragraph (4).

"(iii) Recommendations to Congress for further actions to help with the utilization of artificial intelligence by small business concerns."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BABIN) and the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SUBRAMANYAM) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 3679, the bill that is now under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. BABIN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be here to support H.R. 3679, the Small Business Artificial Intelligence Advancement Act, sponsored by my colleagues, Representatives MIKE COLLINS and HALEY STEVENS.

American small businesses are the backbone of our economy, and it is essential that they leverage cutting-edge innovations to keep the United States at the forefront of the global economy.

As chairman of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee, I have closely followed the accelerating growth of artificial intelligence, or AI, technologies and their wide-ranging applications across industries nationwide.

Major U.S. companies are rapidly developing their own AI technologies and investing in the resources needed to integrate AI into their operations. AI

holds tremendous promise. Incorporating it into a business model is complex and requires significant expertise and capital.

As a result, many small businesses have not yet been able to fully unlock AI's potential. It is time to ensure small businesses can harness these capabilities as well, strengthening American entrepreneurship and competing with the Chinese Communist Party across every dimension of the AI race, including business innovation.

□ 1620

This legislation directs the National Institute of Standards and Technology, or NIST, to develop and share practical resources to help small businesses better understand and adopt artificial intelligence technologies.

This bill is a bipartisan effort to ensure American businesses remain competitive in the AI race and to reinforce our economic leadership globally.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Representatives COLLINS and STEVENS for their work on this very important legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 3679, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SUBRAMANYAM. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Small Business Artificial Intelligence Advancement Act. We are already seeing companies around the world use AI for customer service, cybersecurity, talent recruitment, and even content production.

While AI can bring significant benefits to companies of all sizes, small companies can't afford to take advantage of these benefits. They don't have the millions of dollars and the teams of consultants. They get left behind despite their immense potential. For the small businesses that form the backbone of our economy, navigating rapidly challenging and changing tools like AI can be overwhelming.

This bill directs the National Institute of Standards and Technology to establish and distribute resources on how small businesses can adopt AI tools and risk management practices. It would build on NIST's Small Business Cybersecurity Corner program to help small businesses by providing voluntary guidance on adopting AI and avoiding potential issues with the technology. This bill will help level the playing field for small companies rolling out AI.

AI should be an opportunity for every American business, not just those with the biggest budgets. As AI rapidly evolves from simple automation to agents that could interact with customers, handle sensitive data, and even make decisions, the stakes for getting it right on privacy and cybersecurity are growing. This bill will ensure that our small businesses have access to the practical resources they need to harness this technology.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.