

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3903, 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.

□ 1530

ENHANCING ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEWS FOR BROADBAND DEPLOYMENT ACT

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5419) to direct the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to develop a plan for ensuring timely review of communications use authorizations, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5419

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 "Enhancing Administrative Reviews for Broadband Deployment Act".

SEC. 2. ENSURING TIMELY REVIEW OF BROADBAND LAND USE AUTHORIZATIONS.

(a) STUDY AND REPORT.—

(1) *STUDY.*—The Secretaries concerned shall each conduct, with respect to the relevant covered department, a study to determine—

(A) if there are programmatic or administrative barriers to the timely review of requests for broadband land use authorizations;

(B) if there are revisions to rules or regulations that could be implemented to improve efficiency with respect to reviewing requests for broadband land use authorizations; and

(C) if there are processes for prioritizing the review of requests for broadband land use authorizations.

(2) *REPORT.*—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretaries concerned shall jointly submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report that—

(A) describes the results of the studies conducted under paragraph (1), including any barriers, revisions, or processes identified under subparagraphs (A) through (C) of such paragraph; and

(B) includes a plan for providing, with respect to the organizational units of the relevant covered departments, the staffing necessary to ensure timely review of broadband land use authorizations.

(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) *APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.*—The term "appropriate congressional committees" means the—

(A) Committees on Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives; and

(B) Committees on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and Environment and Public Works of the Senate.

(2) *BROADBAND LAND USE AUTHORIZATION.*—The term "broadband land use authorization" means an easement, right-of-way, lease, license, or other authorization—

(A) provided by the Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of Agriculture;

(B) to locate or modify a communications facility on covered land; and

(C) for the primary purpose of authorizing the occupancy and use of such covered land for communications use.

(3) *COMMUNICATIONS FACILITY.*—The term "communications facility" has the meaning given the term "communications facility installation" in section 6409(d) of the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 (47 U.S.C. 1455(d)).

(4) *COMMUNICATIONS USE.*—The term "communications use" means the placement and operation of a communications facility.

(5) *COVERED LAND.*—The term "covered land" means—

(A) public lands; and

(B) National Forest System land.

(6) *NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM.*—The term "National Forest System" has the meaning given that term in section 11(a) of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 1609(a)).

(7) *ORGANIZATIONAL UNIT.*—The term "organizational unit" means—

(A) with respect to the Department of the Interior—

(i) a State office of the Bureau of Land Management;

(ii) a district office of the Bureau of Land Management; or

(iii) a field office of the Bureau of Land Management; and

(B) with respect to the Department of Agriculture—

(i) a regional office of the Forest Service;

(ii) a management unit of the Forest Service;

or

(iii) a ranger district office of the Forest Service.

(8) *PUBLIC LANDS.*—The term "public lands" has the meaning given that term in section 103 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1702).

(9) *RELEVANT COVERED DEPARTMENT.*—The term "relevant covered department" means—

(A) with respect to the Secretary of the Interior, the Department of the Interior; and

(B) with respect to the Secretary of Agriculture, the Department of Agriculture.

(10) *SECRETARIES CONCERNED.*—The term "Secretaries concerned" means—

(A) the Secretary of the Interior; and

(B) the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. HOYLE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and to add extraneous material on H.R. 5419, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5419, the Enhancing Administrative Reviews for Broadband Deployment Act, introduced by Representative KEAN.

In today's economy, broadband is a necessity, not a luxury. An affordable connection to high-speed internet is

critical, particularly for rural communities that rely on the internet for telehealth appointments, public safety updates, and online learning. Yet in too many rural and Tribal communities, reliable broadband is still costly, rare, or even nonexistent.

Building networks across rural America presents many challenges due to low population density, vast distances, and rugged terrain. To reach these areas, broadband developers must install infrastructure on Federal lands managed by the Department of the Interior or the U.S. Forest Service. Too often the Federal permitting process adds unnecessary costs and years of delay, sometimes taking 5 to 10 years to complete a single broadband project.

That is because broadband providers seeking to connect households and businesses face layered permitting requirements, redundant reviews, and spotty coordination among Federal land management agencies when applying for broadband land-use authorizations. This uncertainty drives up costs and causes rural areas to lag behind urban and suburban areas in connectivity, exacerbating the digital divide.

H.R. 5419 takes a practical approach to this problem. Representative KEAN's legislation recognizes that funding alone cannot connect our rural communities when the permitting process is still broken. This bill focuses on fixing what is actually delaying broadband deployment by requiring agencies to identify and report on permitting bottlenecks, coordination deficiencies, and bureaucratic redundancies that impede the efficient processing of broadband land-use authorizations.

This bill is an important first step in making the Federal Government a better partner in getting modern infrastructure to the communities that need it most.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative KEAN for his leadership on this issue. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 5419, and I reserve the balance of my time.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,

Washington, DC, February 17, 2026.

Hon. BRUCE WESTERMAN,
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources,
Washington, DC.

Dear MR. CHAIRMAN: This letter confirms our mutual understanding regarding H.R. 5419, the "Enhancing Administrative Reviews for Broadband Deployment Act." Thank you for collaborating with the Committee on Agriculture on the matters within our jurisdiction.

The Committee on Agriculture will forego any further consideration of this bill. However, by foregoing consideration at this time, we do not waive any jurisdiction over any subject matter contained in this or similar legislation. The Committee on Agriculture also reserves the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees, should it become necessary, and ask that you support such a request.

We would appreciate a response to this letter confirming this understanding with respect to H.R. 5419 and request a copy of our letters on this matter be published in the

Congressional Record during Floor consideration.

Sincerely,

GLENN "GT" THOMPSON,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES,
Washington, DC, February 17, 2026.

Hon. GLENN THOMPSON,
Chairman, Committee on Agriculture,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THOMPSON: I write regarding H.R. 5419, the "Enhancing Administrative Reviews for Broadband Deployment Act," which was ordered reported by the Committee on Natural Resources on February 11, 2026.

I recognize that the bill contains provisions that fall within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Agriculture and appreciate your willingness to forgo further consideration of the bill. I acknowledge that the Committee on Agriculture will not formally consider H.R. 5419 and agree that the inaction of your Committee with respect to the bill does not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained therein.

I am pleased to support your request to name members of the Committee on Agriculture to any conference committee to consider such provisions. I will ensure that our exchange of letters is included in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the bill and will include such letters in the committee report on H.R. 5419. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation.

Sincerely,

BRUCE WESTERMAN,
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources.

Ms. HOYLE of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 5419 directs the Department of the Interior and the U.S. Forest Service to evaluate policies, rules, and regulations related to the siting and permitting of broadband infrastructure on public lands. This bill is a commonsense step to help update and modernize our broadband infrastructure.

Public lands host a lot of communications infrastructure that Americans rely on every day to connect our smartphones, laptops, and televisions. Broadband isn't just for entertainment. It is what people use to do their jobs, access healthcare, and file their taxes.

Thanks to the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, Oregon recently received Federal approval to move forward with the largest broadband infrastructure investment in our State's history. This will connect over 100,000 unserved and underserved Oregonian households and businesses to affordable, high-speed, and reliable internet services.

However, in States like Oregon and in districts like the one I have the honor to represent with large amounts of Federal land, broadband infrastructure projects often require additional levels of permitting and coordination across local, State, and Federal Government.

H.R. 5419 will help us look for opportunities to address any broadband permitting barriers and update the rules in a measured and responsible way.

This bill will help balance two critical obligations: building out the infra-

structure we need for vital technology and upholding our commitment to the health and stewardship of our public lands. We can and must meet both obligations.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from New Jersey (Mr. KEAN) for introducing this bill. I urge my colleagues to vote in support of H.R. 5419, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. KEAN), the lead sponsor of this bill.

Mr. KEAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak in favor of my legislation, H.R. 5419, the Enhancing Administrative Reviews for Broadband Deployment Act.

Even as our world increasingly relies on the internet to access daily needs, communities across the country still lack a reliable wireless connection, especially in the most rural and Tribal communities.

The process of obtaining permits to improve broadband and communications infrastructure in these areas is often duplicative, inconsistent between agencies, and can set projects back by years.

Outdated bureaucratic processes, inefficiencies, and delays should not stand between American communities and access to a reliable internet connection.

My legislation directs an interagency review of the procedures used by the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture to process permitting requests for communications infrastructure. This will allow Congress to direct smart and targeted reforms to improve efficiency, timeliness, and help accelerate access to the internet.

For government to work at its best and most responsive, we must invite regular reevaluation of its procedures, judge what works and what doesn't, and implement process improvements so that the Federal Government can better serve American people into the future. This legislation does just that.

H.R. 5419 ensures a coordinated interagency approach to making the government run more efficiently so our Federal Government is an active participant in, not an obstacle to, bridging the digital divide.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the partnership of Chairman WESTERMAN and bipartisan colleagues as this bill passed through the House Committee on Natural Resources earlier this month. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Ms. HOYLE of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 5419 is a bill that cuts red tape, streamlines approvals, and accelerates broadband access by addressing the permitting barriers that

slow broadband development on Federal lands. By identifying areas to improve coordination, reduce onerous reviews, and strengthen the permitting processing at the Federal level, this bill will help close the digital divide that exists in rural and Tribal communities.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support Representative KEAN's legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SESSIONS). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5419, 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 direct the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to develop a plan for ensuring timely review of broadband land use authorizations, and for other purposes."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CRITICAL MINERAL CONSISTENCY ACT OF 2025

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 755) to amend the Energy Act of 2020 to include critical materials in the definition of critical mineral, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 755

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 "Critical Mineral Consistency Act of 2025".

SEC. 2. CRITICAL MINERALS AND MATERIALS LIST.

Section 7002 of the Energy Act of 2020 (30 U.S.C. 1606) is amended—

(1) in subsection (c)(4)(C), by inserting "minerals or materials" after "critical";

(2) by redesignating subsection (o) as subsection (p); and

(3) by inserting after subsection (n) the following:

"(o) CRITICAL MINERALS AND MATERIALS LIST.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 45 days after the date of enactment of the Critical Mineral Consistency Act of 2025, the Secretary shall publish a Critical Minerals and Materials List, which shall include—

"(A) any critical mineral designated by the Secretary under subsection (c); and

"(B) any non-fuel mineral, element, substance, or material that the Secretary of Energy has determined to be a critical material under subsection (a)(2) as of that date of enactment.

"(2) UPDATES.—The Secretary shall update the Critical Minerals and Materials List published under paragraph (1)—

"(A) not later than 45 days after the date on which the Secretary updates a critical mineral designation under subsection (c); and

"(B) not later than 45 days after the date on which the Secretary of Energy updates a critical material designation under subsection (a)(2).