

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
 COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
 Washington, DC, January 13, 2025.
 Hon. BRUCE WESTERMAN,
 Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources,
 Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: This letter confirms our mutual understanding regarding H.R. 4284, the "Small Cemetery Conveyance 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. 4284 and request a copy of our letters on this matter be published in the Congressional Record during Floor consideration.

Sincerely,
 GLENN "GT" THOMPSON,
 Chairman.

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
 COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES,
 Washington, DC, January 13, 2026.
 Hon. GLENN THOMPSON,
 Chairman, Committee on Agriculture,
 Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN THOMPSON: I write regarding H.R. 4284, the "Small Cemetery Conveyance Act," which was ordered reported by the Committee on Natural Resources on December 17, 2025.

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. 4284 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. 4284. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation.

Sincerely,
 BRUCE WESTERMAN,
 Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
 COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
 Washington, DC, June 30, 2025.
 Hon. BRUCE WESTERMAN,
 Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources,
 Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: This letter confirms our mutual understanding regarding H.R. 1665, the "DIGITAL Applications 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. 1665 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, July 1, 2025.
 Hon. GLENN "GT" THOMPSON,
 Chairman, Committee on Agriculture,
 Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I write regarding our mutual understanding of H.R. 1665, the DIGITAL Applications Act, which was ordered report by the Committee on Natural Resources.

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. 1665 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. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation.

Sincerely,
 BRUCE WESTERMAN,
 Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources.

Ms. ELFRETH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 4284, the Small Cemetery Conveyance Act, introduced by the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ).

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 4284 amends the Small Tract Act of 1983 to allow States, local governments, federally recognized Tribes, and land-grant mercedes to request small conveyances of cemetery land. As the chairman said, this is an important update that sets out to fix a deeply personal problem for many rural communities, particularly in the West.

Land grant and Tribal communities have existed long before the United States of America or the Forest Service were around. Today, many of these communities find their cemeteries located on Forest Service land, and this bill will enhance access and improve stewardship of these important tracts.

While H.R. 4284 waives the need to pay for or exchange land for these sites, this does not signify a giveaway or sell-off of these public lands. This is, rather, about dignity and respect.

Importantly, this bill requires all conveyed lands to be managed as a cemetery in perpetuity, and this ensures an ongoing public purpose and allows communities to take care of their ancestors for generations to come.

I thank the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ) and the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. HURD) for their efforts to return these important burial sites to their constituents.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to vote "yes" on this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time. I am prepared to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, this is a simple, bipartisan measure that serves the spiritual needs of rural, Tribal, and local communities across the West. It lightens the administrative burden on the Forest Service and reduces the Federal footprint. Above all, it returns the protection and care of local cemeteries to those with the closest connections to them.

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

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. 4284, 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.

DEPLOYING INFRASTRUCTURE WITH GREATER INTERNET TRANSACTIONS AND LEGACY APPLICATIONS ACT

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1665) to require the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture to establish online portals to accept, process, and dispose of certain Form 299s, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1665

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 "Deploying Infrastructure with Greater Internet Transactions and Legacy Applications Act" or the "DIGITAL Applications Act".

SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT OF ONLINE PORTALS TO ACCEPT, PROCESS, AND DISPOSE OF CERTAIN FORM 299s.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF ONLINE PORTALS.—

(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretaries concerned shall each establish, with respect to the relevant covered department, an online portal for the acceptance, processing, and disposal of a Form 299 for communications use authorizations.

(2) NOTIFICATION.—Not later than 3 business days after the date on which an online portal has been established by a Secretary pursuant to paragraph (1), that Secretary shall notify the Assistant Secretary of the establishment of such portal.

(b) AVAILABILITY OF ONLINE PORTALS.—The Assistant Secretary shall publish on the website of the National Telecommunications

and Information Administration a link to each online portal established pursuant to subsection (a)(1).

(C) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) ASSISTANT SECRETARY.—The term “Assistant Secretary” means the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information.

(2) 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)).

(3) COMMUNICATIONS USE.—The term “communications use” means the placement and operation of a communications facility.

(4) COMMUNICATIONS USE AUTHORIZATION.—The term “communications 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.

(5) COVERED LAND.—The term “covered land” means—

(A) public lands; and

(B) National Forest System land.

(6) FORM 299.—The term “Form 299” means the form established under section 6409(b)(2)(A) of the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 (47 U.S.C. 1455(b)(2)(A)), or any successor form.

(7) 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)).

(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 Maryland (Ms. ELFRETH) 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 to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 1665, 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 today in strong support of the DIGITAL Applications Act, a bipartisan bill introduced by Representative CAMMACK.

This important legislation directs the Department of the Interior and De-

partment of Agriculture to establish online portals to accept, process, and track applications to deploy broadband infrastructure on Federal lands.

The United States faces a persistent digital divide, with tens of millions of Americans still lacking access to basic broadband services. Many of these Americans live in rural areas or on Tribal lands near federally managed land.

For these communities, broadband isn't a luxury. It is essential infrastructure. It means students can do their homework at home; small businesses can reach customers and compete in the modern economy; farmers and ranchers can use precision tools; and families can access telehealth, emergency services, and basic information. Without reliable internet, entire communities are left at a disadvantage.

In too many cases, the problem isn't a lack of interest from providers but, rather, the Federal permitting process.

Today, broadband providers face a system that is slow, opaque, and unpredictable. Applications can sit for months with little to no communication. Providers have no idea where their applications stand, whether more information is needed, or when a decision might come.

That uncertainty makes it harder to plan projects and invest resources, ultimately delaying the delivery of internet access to the communities that need it most.

This permitting morass is exactly how the Biden-Harris administration wasted \$42 billion in taxpayer funds to deploy broadband infrastructure across the country and failed to connect a single household.

Throwing money at this problem is not the answer. We need commonsense permitting reform. Representative CAMMACK's legislation offers a real, straightforward solution to a discrete problem.

By creating online portals for broadband application, agencies can bring transparency and accountability to the permitting process. Applicants will be able to track their submissions, see where they are in the review process, and understand exactly what is needed to move forward.

This kind of transparency is a simple fix that can bring more predictability to developers and help speed deployment. H.R. 1665 will help build essential infrastructure faster, smarter, and with more transparency.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this bipartisan legislation, and I commend Representative CAMMACK for her leadership on this effort.

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

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND
TECHNOLOGY,

Washington, DC, January 30, 2026.

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

DEAR CHAIRMAN WESTERMAN: I write concerning H.R. 2294, To reauthorize the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act of 2009, which the Committee on Natural Resources ordered reported on July 23, 2025.

H.R. 2294 contains provisions within the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology's Rule X jurisdiction. As a result of your having consulted with the Committee and to expedite this bill for floor consideration, the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology will forego action on the bill. This is being done based on our mutual understanding that doing so will not diminish or alter the jurisdiction of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology with respect to the appointment of conferees, or to any future jurisdictional claim of the subject matters contained in the bill or similar legislation.

I would appreciate your response to this letter confirming this understanding and would request that you include a copy of this letter and your response in the Committee Report and in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of this bill. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

BRIAN BABIN, D.D.S.,
Chairman, Committee on Science, Space, and
Technology.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES,
Washington, DC, January 30, 2026.

Hon. BRIAN BABIN,
Chairman, Committee on Science, Space, and
Technology,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN BABIN: I write regarding H.R. 2294, To reauthorize the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act of 2009, which was ordered reported by the Committee on Natural Resources on July 23, 2025.

I recognize that the bill contains provisions that fall within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology and appreciate your willingness to forgo further consideration of the bill. I acknowledge that the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology will not formally consider H.R. 2294 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 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. 2294. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation.

Sincerely,

BRUCE WESTERMAN,
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources.

□ 1630

Ms. ELFRETH. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 1665, the DIGITAL Applications Act, sponsored by my colleagues, Representative CAMMACK and Representative MATSUI, which would promote accessibility and transparency in the permitting process for communications use authorizations.

While many agencies are working to modernize their systems, application processes too often continue to rely on

snail mail or email, which can lead to delays and challenges in submitting and processing.

H.R. 1665 complements ongoing agency efforts to modernize the Federal permitting system by requiring the Department of the Interior and the U.S. Forest Service to establish online portals for processing applications to locate or modify communications or broadband equipment and infrastructure on Federal lands.

This is a bipartisan solution to address delays in the permitting process appropriately, while also supporting expanded digital connectivity across our public lands in the year 2026.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the Representatives for bringing this commonsense solution. It is about time we bring internet access to every corner of our country. I also thank the bill's sponsor.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support of H.R. 1665, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. CAMMACK), the lead sponsor of the bill.

Mrs. CAMMACK. Mr. Speaker, I thank the chairman for his support.

Today, I rise in support of H.R. 1665, the DIGITAL Applications Act, legislation that I introduced to modernize how our Federal agencies process applications for communications infrastructure on Federal lands.

At its core, this bill is about something very simple: bringing outdated government processes into the digital age.

Today, companies seeking to deploy broadband infrastructure on Federal lands must often submit a form 299 to the Department of the Interior or the Department of Agriculture to obtain authorization for communication facilities, such as towers or related equipment. These authorizations can take the form of easements, right-of-ways, leases, or licenses.

Despite the importance of these projects, particularly when connectivity is needed more than ever, and public safety is a priority, the application process itself is far too paper-based, fragmented, and slow. In 2026, that just doesn't make sense.

The DIGITAL Applications Act fixes that by requiring the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture to establish online portals to accept, process, and manage these forms. These portals will allow applicants to submit materials electronically, track the progress, and improve coordination across agencies. It is a straightforward reform, but one with real impact.

For communities across the country, especially rural communities like the ones I represent in Florida, delays in permitting infrastructure can mean delays in access, weaker wireless coverage, and slower deployment of technologies that are critical to support economic growth and public safety.

When we talk about closing the digital divide, it is not just about funding

new networks. It is also about removing unnecessary red tape and bureaucratic barriers that slow down this progress.

This bill does exactly that. By digitizing the application process, we can reduce these administrative delays, increase transparency, and provide applicants with a clear path forward when seeking a path to build infrastructure on these lands.

The DIGITAL Applications Act also reflects strong bipartisan cooperation, and I thank my colleague, Representative MATSUI, for working so hard with me on this to advance a commonsense solution.

At a time when Americans expect government to operate with the same efficiency they experience in the private sector, modernizing outdated systems should be something that we can all agree on.

This bill improves government operations, supports broadband, and helps ensure that our communications infrastructure keeps pace with the needs of the 21st century.

Mr. Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support the DIGITAL Applications Act.

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

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I once again thank Representative CAMMACK for her leadership on the DIGITAL Applications Act. This legislation will help get rural America online to support students, small businesses, farmers, ranchers, and families. It will help constituents in my home State of Arkansas, as well as Americans across the country, who live in remote areas near Federal lands.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 1665, and I yield back the balance of my time.

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. 1665.

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

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REAUTHORIZATION OF INTEGRATED COASTAL AND OCEAN OBSERVATION SYSTEM ACT OF 2009

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2294) to reauthorize the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act of 2009, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2294

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

SECTION 1. REAUTHORIZATION OF INTEGRATED COASTAL AND OCEAN OBSERVATION SYSTEM ACT OF 2009.

The Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act of 2009 (33 U.S.C. 3601 et seq.) is amended—

(1) by striking “Council” each place it appears and inserting “Committee”;

(2) in section 12303 (33 U.S.C. 3602)—

(A) in paragraph (2)—

(i) in the heading, by striking “COUNCIL” and inserting “COMMITTEE”; and

(ii) by striking “National Ocean Research Leadership Council” and inserting “Ocean Policy Committee”; and

(B) in paragraph (6), by inserting “conduct operational oceanography measurements and” after “in order to”;

(3) in section 12304 (33 U.S.C. 3603)—

(A) by inserting “and ocean” after “weather” each place it appears; and

(B) in subsection (c)—

(i) in the heading of paragraph (1), by striking “COUNCIL” and inserting “COMMITTEE”; and

(ii) in paragraph (2)(B)—

(I) by redesignating clauses (vi) through (x) as clauses (vii) through (xi), respectively; and

(II) by inserting after clause (v) the following:

“(vi) develop requirements and processes for regional offices and federally funded projects of the agencies of the Interagency Ocean Observation Committee to collaborate with the regional coastal observing systems for data sharing at regional levels;”;

(4) in section 12311 (33 U.S.C. 3610)—

(A) in paragraph (4), by striking “and” at the end;

(B) in paragraph (5), by striking the period at the end and inserting “; and”; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

“(6) \$47,500,000 for each of fiscal years 2026 through 2030.”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WITTMAN) and the gentlewoman from Maryland (Ms. ELFRETH) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WITTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 2294, the bill now under consideration.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2294, to reauthorize the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act of 2009, sponsored by Representative EZELL from Mississippi.

The Integrated Ocean Observing System, or IOOS, is a public-private partnership of coastal observation systems that provide local decisionmakers with the latest science to prepare for and protect coastal communities from disasters, while also supporting numerous industries that operate in our marine waters.

The legislation before us would authorize the program through fiscal year 2030, ensuring continued support for fisheries, maritime industries, and coastal communities.