

Union Calendar No. 647

115TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 4881

[Report No. 115–837]

To require the Federal Communications Commission to establish a task force for meeting the connectivity and technology needs of precision agriculture in the United States.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 25, 2018

Mr. LATTA (for himself and Mr. LOEBSACK) introduced the following bill;
which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

JULY 18, 2018

Additional sponsors: Mrs. HARTZLER, Mr. LUETKEMEYER, Mr. BLUM, Mr. CRAMER, Mrs. BROOKS of Indiana, Mr. YOUNG of Iowa, Mrs. BLACKBURN, Mr. GRIFFITH, and Mr. WALDEN

JULY 18, 2018

Reported with amendments, committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, and ordered to be printed

[Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in *italic*]

[For text of introduced bill, see copy of bill as introduced on January 25, 2018]

A BILL

To require the Federal Communications Commission to establish a task force for meeting the connectivity and technology needs of precision agriculture in the United States.

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 “Precision Agriculture*
5 *Connectivity Act of 2018”.*

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 *Congress finds the following:*

8 *(1) Precision agriculture technologies and prac-*
9 *tices allow farmers to significantly increase crop*
10 *yields, eliminate overlap in operations, and reduce*
11 *inputs such as seed, fertilizer, pesticides, water, and*
12 *fuel.*

13 *(2) These technologies allow farmers to collect*
14 *data in real time about their fields, automate field*
15 *management, and maximize resources.*

16 *(3) Studies estimate that precision agriculture*
17 *technologies can reduce agricultural operation costs*
18 *by up to 25 dollars per acre and increase farm yields*
19 *by up to 70 percent by 2050.*

20 *(4) The critical cost savings and productivity*
21 *benefits of precision agriculture cannot be realized*
22 *without the availability of reliable broadband Internet*
23 *access service delivered to the agricultural land of the*
24 *United States.*

1 (5) *The deployment of broadband Internet access*
2 *service to unserved agricultural land is critical to the*
3 *United States economy and to the continued leader-*
4 *ship of the United States in global food production.*

5 (6) *Despite the growing demand for broadband*
6 *Internet access service on agricultural land,*
7 *broadband Internet access service is not consistently*
8 *available where needed for agricultural operations.*

9 (7) *The Federal Communications Commission*
10 *has an important role to play in the deployment of*
11 *broadband Internet access service on unserved agricul-*
12 *tural land to promote precision agriculture.*

13 **SEC. 3. TASK FORCE.**

14 (a) *DEFINITIONS.—In this section—*

15 (1) *the term “broadband Internet access serv-*
16 *ice”—*

17 (A) *means a mass-market retail service by*
18 *wire or radio that provides the capability to*
19 *transmit data to and receive data from all or*
20 *substantially all Internet endpoints, including*
21 *any capabilities that are incidental to and en-*
22 *able the operation of the communications service,*
23 *but excluding dial-up Internet access service; and*

24 (B) *also encompasses any service that the*
25 *Commission finds to be providing a functional*

1 *equivalent of the service described in subpara-*
2 *graph (A);*

3 *(2) the term “Commission” means the Federal*
4 *Communications Commission;*

5 *(3) the term “Department” means the Depart-*
6 *ment of Agriculture;*

7 *(4) the term “Secretary” means the Secretary of*
8 *Agriculture; and*

9 *(5) the term “Task Force” means the Task Force*
10 *for Reviewing the Connectivity and Technology Needs*
11 *of Precision Agriculture in the United States estab-*
12 *lished under subsection (b).*

13 *(b) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 1 year after the*
14 *date of enactment of this Act, the Commission shall establish*
15 *the Task Force for Reviewing the Connectivity and Tech-*
16 *nology Needs of Precision Agriculture in the United States.*

17 *(c) DUTIES.—*

18 *(1) IN GENERAL.—The Task Force shall consult*
19 *with the Secretary, or a designee of the Secretary, and*
20 *collaborate with public and private stakeholders in*
21 *the agriculture and technology fields to—*

22 *(A) identify and measure current gaps in*
23 *the availability of broadband Internet access*
24 *service on agricultural land;*

1 (B) develop policy recommendations to pro-
2 mote the rapid, expanded deployment of
3 broadband Internet access service on unserved
4 agricultural land, with a goal of achieving reli-
5 able capabilities on 95 percent of agricultural
6 land in the United States by 2025;

7 (C) promote effective policy and regulatory
8 solutions that encourage the adoption of
9 broadband Internet access service on farms and
10 ranches and promote precision agriculture;

11 (D) recommend specific new rules or
12 amendments to existing rules of the Commission
13 that the Commission should issue to achieve the
14 goals and purposes of the policy recommenda-
15 tions described in subparagraph (B);

16 (E) recommend specific steps that the Com-
17 mission should take to obtain reliable and stand-
18 ardized data measurements of the availability of
19 broadband Internet access service as may be nec-
20 essary to target funding support, from future
21 programs of the Commission dedicated to the de-
22 ployment of broadband Internet access service, to
23 unserved agricultural land in need of broadband
24 Internet access service; and

1 (F) recommend specific steps that the Com-
2 mission should consider to ensure that the exper-
3 tise of the Secretary and available farm data are
4 reflected in future programs of the Commission
5 dedicated to the infrastructure deployment of
6 broadband Internet access service and to direct
7 available funding to unserved agricultural land
8 where needed.

9 (2) NO DUPLICATE DATA REPORTING.—In per-
10 forming the duties of the Commission under para-
11 graph (1), the Commission shall ensure that no pro-
12 vider of broadband Internet access service is required
13 to report data to the Commission that is, on the day
14 before the date of enactment of this Act, required to
15 be reported by the provider of broadband Internet ac-
16 cess service.

17 (3) HOLD HARMLESS.—The Task Force and the
18 Commission shall not interpret the phrase “future
19 programs of the Commission”, as used in subpara-
20 graphs (E) and (F) of paragraph (1), to include the
21 universal service programs of the Commission estab-
22 lished under section 254 of the Communications Act
23 of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 254).

24 (4) CONSULTATION.—The Secretary, or a des-
25 ignee of the Secretary, shall explain and make avail-

1 *able to the Task Force the expertise, data mapping*
2 *information, and resources of the Department that the*
3 *Department uses to identify cropland, rangeland, and*
4 *other areas with agricultural operations that may be*
5 *helpful in developing the recommendations required*
6 *under paragraph (1).*

7 (5) *LIST OF AVAILABLE FEDERAL PROGRAMS*
8 *AND RESOURCES.*—*Not later than 180 days after the*
9 *date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary and the*
10 *Commission shall jointly submit to the Task Force a*
11 *list of all Federal programs or resources available for*
12 *the expansion of broadband Internet access service on*
13 *unserved agricultural land to assist the Task Force in*
14 *carrying out the duties of the Task Force.*

15 (d) *MEMBERSHIP.*—

16 (1) *IN GENERAL.*—*The Task Force shall be—*

17 (A) *composed of not more than 15 voting*
18 *members who shall—*

19 (i) *be selected by the Chairman of the*
20 *Commission, in consultation with the Sec-*
21 *retary; and*

22 (ii) *include—*

23 (I) *agricultural producers rep-*
24 *resenting diverse geographic regions*
25 *and farm sizes, including owners and*

1 operators of farms of less than 100
2 acres;

3 (II) an agricultural producer rep-
4 resenting tribal agriculture;

5 (III) Internet service providers,
6 including regional or rural fixed and
7 mobile broadband Internet access serv-
8 ice providers and telecommunications
9 infrastructure providers;

10 (IV) representatives from the elec-
11 tric cooperative industry;

12 (V) representatives from the sat-
13 ellite industry;

14 (VI) representatives from preci-
15 sion agriculture equipment manufac-
16 turers, including drone manufacturers,
17 manufacturers of autonomous agricul-
18 tural machinery, and manufacturers of
19 farming robotics technologies;

20 (VII) representatives from State
21 and local governments; and

22 (VIII) representatives with rel-
23 evant expertise in broadband network
24 data collection, geospatial analysis,
25 and coverage mapping; and

1 (B) *fairly balanced in terms of technologies,*
2 *points of view, and fields represented on the Task*
3 *Force.*

4 (2) *PERIOD OF APPOINTMENT; VACANCIES.—*

5 (A) *IN GENERAL.—A member of the Task*
6 *Force appointed under paragraph (1)(A) shall*
7 *serve for a single term of 2 years.*

8 (B) *VACANCIES.—Any vacancy in the Task*
9 *Force—*

10 (i) *shall not affect the powers of the*
11 *Task Force; and*

12 (ii) *shall be filled in the same manner*
13 *as the original appointment.*

14 (3) *EX-OFFICIO MEMBER.—The Secretary, or a*
15 *designee of the Secretary, shall serve as an ex-officio,*
16 *nonvoting member of the Task Force.*

17 (e) *REPORTS.—Not later than 1 year after the date*
18 *on which the Commission establishes the Task Force, and*
19 *annually thereafter, the Task Force shall submit to the*
20 *Chairman of the Commission a report, which shall be made*
21 *public not later than 30 days after the date on which the*
22 *Chairman receives the report, that details—*

23 (1) *the status of fixed and mobile broadband*
24 *Internet access service coverage of agricultural land;*

1 (2) *the projected future connectivity needs of ag-*
2 *ricultural operations, farmers, and ranchers; and*

3 (3) *the steps being taken to accurately measure*
4 *the availability of broadband Internet access service*
5 *on agricultural land and the limitations of current,*
6 *as of the date of the report, measurement processes.*

7 (f) *TERMINATION.—The Commission shall renew the*
8 *Task Force every 2 years until the Task Force terminates*
9 *on January 1, 2025.*

Amend the title so as to read: “A bill to require the Federal Communications Commission to establish a task force for reviewing the connectivity and technology needs of precision agriculture in the United States.”.

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