

115TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 4881

AN ACT

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.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Precision Agriculture
3 Connectivity Act of 2018”.

4 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

5 Congress finds the following:

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

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

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

18 (4) The critical cost savings and productivity
19 benefits of precision agriculture cannot be realized
20 without the availability of reliable broadband Inter-
21 net access service delivered to the agricultural land
22 of the United States.

23 (5) The deployment of broadband Internet ac-
24 cess service to unserved agricultural land is critical
25 to the United States economy and to the continued

1 leadership of the United States in global food pro-
2 duction.

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

7 (7) The Federal Communications Commission
8 has an important role to play in the deployment of
9 broadband Internet access service on unserved agri-
10 cultural land to promote precision agriculture.

11 **SEC. 3. TASK FORCE.**

12 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

13 (1) the term “broadband Internet access serv-
14 ice”—

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

23 (B) also encompasses any service that the
24 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
8 of Agriculture; and

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

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

18 (c) DUTIES.—

19 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Task Force shall con-
20 sult with the Secretary, or a designee of the Sec-
21 retary, and collaborate with public and private
22 stakeholders in the agriculture and technology fields
23 to—

1 (A) identify and measure current gaps in
2 the availability of broadband Internet access
3 service on agricultural land;

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

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

14 (D) recommend specific new rules or
15 amendments to existing rules of the Commis-
16 sion that the Commission should issue to
17 achieve the goals and purposes of the policy rec-
18 ommendations described in subparagraph (B);

19 (E) recommend specific steps that the
20 Commission should take to obtain reliable and
21 standardized data measurements of the avail-
22 ability of broadband Internet access service as
23 may be necessary to target funding support,
24 from future programs of the Commission dedi-
25 cated to the deployment of broadband Internet

1 access service, to unserved agricultural land in
2 need of broadband Internet access service; and

3 (F) recommend specific steps that the
4 Commission should consider to ensure that the
5 expertise of the Secretary and available farm
6 data are reflected in future programs of the
7 Commission dedicated to the infrastructure de-
8 ployment of broadband Internet access service
9 and to direct available funding to unserved ag-
10 ricultural land where needed.

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

19 (3) HOLD HARMLESS.—The Task Force and
20 the Commission shall not interpret the phrase “fu-
21 ture programs of the Commission”, as used in sub-
22 paragraphs (E) and (F) of paragraph (1), to include
23 the universal service programs of the Commission
24 established under section 254 of the Communica-
25 tions Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 254).

1 (4) CONSULTATION.—The Secretary, or a des-
2 ignee of the Secretary, shall explain and make avail-
3 able to the Task Force the expertise, data mapping
4 information, and resources of the Department that
5 the Department uses to identify cropland, rangeland,
6 and other areas with agricultural operations that
7 may be helpful in developing the recommendations
8 required under paragraph (1).

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

18 (d) MEMBERSHIP.—

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

20 (A) composed of not more than 15 voting
21 members who shall—

22 (i) be selected by the Chairman of the
23 Commission, in consultation with the Sec-
24 retary; and

25 (ii) include—

1 (I) agricultural producers rep-
2 resenting diverse geographic regions
3 and farm sizes, including owners and
4 operators of farms of less than 100
5 acres;

6 (II) an agricultural producer rep-
7 resenting tribal agriculture;

8 (III) Internet service providers,
9 including regional or rural fixed and
10 mobile broadband Internet access
11 service providers and telecommuni-
12 cations infrastructure providers;

13 (IV) representatives from the
14 electric cooperative industry;

15 (V) representatives from the sat-
16 ellite industry;

17 (VI) representatives from preci-
18 sion agriculture equipment manufac-
19 turers, including drone manufactur-
20 ers, manufacturers of autonomous ag-
21 ricultural machinery, and manufactur-
22 ers of farming robotics technologies;

23 (VII) representatives from State
24 and local governments; and

1 (VIII) representatives with rel-
2 evant expertise in broadband network
3 data collection, geospatial analysis,
4 and coverage mapping; and

5 (B) fairly balanced in terms of tech-
6 nologies, points of view, and fields represented
7 on the Task Force.

8 (2) PERIOD OF APPOINTMENT; VACANCIES.—

9 (A) IN GENERAL.—A member of the Task
10 Force appointed under paragraph (1)(A) shall
11 serve for a single term of 2 years.

12 (B) VACANCIES.—Any vacancy in the Task
13 Force—

14 (i) shall not affect the powers of the
15 Task Force; and

16 (ii) shall be filled in the same manner
17 as the original appointment.

18 (3) EX-OFFICIO MEMBER.—The Secretary, or a
19 designee of the Secretary, shall serve as an ex-offi-
20 cio, nonvoting member of the Task Force.

21 (e) REPORTS.—Not later than 1 year after the date
22 on which the Commission establishes the Task Force, and
23 annually thereafter, the Task Force shall submit to the
24 Chairman of the Commission a report, which shall be

1 made public not later than 30 days after the date on which
2 the Chairman receives the report, that details—

3 (1) the status of fixed and mobile broadband
4 Internet access service coverage of agricultural land;

5 (2) the projected future connectivity needs of
6 agricultural operations, farmers, and ranchers; and

7 (3) the steps being taken to accurately measure
8 the availability of broadband Internet access service
9 on agricultural land and the limitations of current,
10 as of the date of the report, measurement processes.

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

14 **SEC. 4. NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS AUTHORIZED.**

15 No additional funds are authorized to be appro-
16 priated to carry out this Act. This Act shall be carried
17 out using amounts otherwise authorized.

Passed the House of Representatives July 23, 2018.

Attest:

Clerk.

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