

115TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 875

AN ACT

To require the Comptroller General of the United States to conduct a study and submit a report on filing requirements under the Universal Service Fund programs.

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. STUDY AND REPORT ON FILING REQUIRE-**
2 **MENTS UNDER UNIVERSAL SERVICE FUND**
3 **PROGRAMS.**

4 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

5 (1) the term “Administrative Procedure Act”
6 means subchapter II of chapter 5 of title 5, United
7 States Code;

8 (2) the term “Commission” means the Federal
9 Communications Commission;

10 (3) the term “covered carrier” means an eligi-
11 ble telecommunications carrier or service provider
12 that receives universal service support under sections
13 214(e) and 254 of the Communications Act of 1934
14 (47 U.S.C. 214(e) and 254) for the provision of
15 service under a Universal Service Fund program;
16 and

17 (4) the term “Universal Service Fund program”
18 means each program of the Commission set forth
19 under part 54 of title 47, Code of Federal Regula-
20 tions, or any successor thereto, including—

21 (A) the Connect America Fund set forth
22 under subpart D of that part;

23 (B) the Lifeline program set forth under
24 subpart E of that part;

25 (C) the E-Rate program set forth under
26 subpart F of that part;

1 (D) the Rural Health Care program set
2 forth under subpart G of that part;

3 (E) the Remote Areas Fund set forth
4 under subpart J of that part;

5 (F) the Connect America Fund Broadband
6 Loop Support program set forth under subpart
7 K of that part;

8 (G) the Mobility Fund set forth under sub-
9 part L of that part; and

10 (H) the High Cost Loop Support for Rate-
11 of-Return Carriers program set forth under
12 subpart M of that part.

13 (b) STUDY AND REPORT.—Not later than 18 months
14 after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller
15 General of the United States shall conduct a study and
16 submit to the Commission, the Committee on Commerce,
17 Science, and Transportation of the Senate, and the Com-
18 mittee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Rep-
19 resentatives a report, which shall include—

20 (1) an analysis of the filing requirements for
21 covered carriers participating in a Universal Service
22 Fund program, including any filings required by the
23 Universal Service Administrative Company;

(2) an analysis of the financial impact of those filing requirements on covered carriers participating in a Universal Service Fund program; and

(3) recommendations, if any, on how to consolidate redundant filing requirements for covered carriers participating in a Universal Service Fund program.

(c) RULEMAKING.—

(1) NEW OR ONGOING RULEMAKING.—Except as provided in paragraph (3), not later than 60 days after the date on which the report is submitted under subsection (b), the Commission shall—

(A)(i) initiate a rulemaking to consolidate redundant filing requirements for covered carriers participating in a Universal Service Fund program; and

(ii) incorporate into the rulemaking under clause (i), and as part of that rulemaking seek comment on, the recommendations described in subsection (b)(3), if any, except to the extent that doing so would violate the requirements of the Administrative Procedure Act; or

(B) incorporate into an ongoing rulemaking relating to consolidating redundant filing requirements of the Commission, and as

1 part of that rulemaking seek comment on, the
2 recommendations described in subsection (b)(3),
3 if any, except to the extent that doing so would
4 violate the requirements of the Administrative
5 Procedure Act.

6 (2) WASTE, FRAUD, AND ABUSE.—In a rule-
7 making in which the Commission is required under
8 paragraph (1) to seek comment on the recommenda-
9 tions described in subsection (b)(3), if any, the Com-
10 mission shall also seek comment on and consider
11 whether the benefit of each recommendation is out-
12 weighed by any potential increased risk of waste,
13 fraud, and abuse in the Universal Service Fund pro-
14 gram affected by the recommendation.

15 (3) PREVIOUS RULEMAKING.—Paragraph (1)
16 shall not apply if, on or before the date on which the
17 report is submitted under subsection (b), the Com-
18 mission completes a rulemaking to consolidate re-
19 dundant filing requirements for covered carriers par-
20 ticipating in a Universal Service Fund program.

Passed the Senate January 10, 2018.

Attest:

Secretary.

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