

115TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 5016

To direct the Secretary of Transportation to establish a Revitalize Rural America Grant Program, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 14, 2018

Mr. ABRAHAM introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Transportation to establish a Revitalize Rural America Grant Program, and for other purposes.

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 “Revitalize Rural Amer-
5 ica Act of 2018”.

6 **SEC. 2. REVITALIZE RURAL AMERICA GRANT PROGRAM.**

7 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 120 days
2 after the date of enactment of this Act, the Sec-
3 retary of Transportation shall establish a Revitalize
4 Rural America Grant Program (in this section re-
5 ferred to as the “Program”) to facilitate infrastruc-
6 ture projects in rural areas.

7 (2) GOALS.—The goals of the Program shall be
8 to—

9 (A) generate regional and national eco-
10 nomic benefits;

11 (B) improve the safety, efficiency, and reli-
12 ability of the movement of people, commodities,
13 and goods;

14 (C) reduce highway congestion and bottle-
15 necks;

16 (D) improve connectivity between modes of
17 transportation;

18 (E) enhance the resiliency of critical infra-
19 structure;

20 (F) improve infrastructure vital to national
21 energy and food security;

22 (G) increase access to reliable high-speed
23 internet; and

24 (H) improve the health and vitality of
25 rural communities.

1 (b) GRANT AUTHORITY.—

2 (1) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out the Pro-
3 gram, the Secretary may make grants, on a competi-
4 tive basis, to public and private entities in accord-
5 ance with this section.

6 (2) LIMITATIONS.—

7 (A) LOCATION.—The Secretary may only
8 make a grant under the Program for a project
9 carried out in a rural area (as such term is de-
10 fined in section 117(i)(3) of title 23, United
11 States Code).

12 (B) AMOUNT.—The aggregate amount of
13 grant funding that the Secretary may provide
14 under the Program for an individual project
15 may not exceed \$40,000,000.

16 (c) APPLICATIONS.—To be eligible for a grant under
17 the Program an entity shall submit to the Secretary an
18 application in such form, at such time, and containing
19 such information as the Secretary determines is appro-
20 priate.

21 (d) ELIGIBLE PROJECTS.—The Secretary may make
22 a grant under the Program for a project that is—

23 (1) a highway or bridge project carried out on
24 the National Highway System;

1 (2) a highway freight project carried out on the
2 National Highway Freight Network established
3 under section 167 of title 23, United States Code;

4 (3) a drinking water or wastewater project;

5 (4) a telecommunications project;

6 (5) a project for flood control or waterborne
7 navigation; or

8 (6) a project related to the electric grid.

9 (e) ELIGIBLE PROJECT COSTS.—Grant amounts re-
10 ceived for a project under the Program may be used for—

11 (1) development phase activities, including plan-
12 ning, feasibility analysis, revenue forecasting, envi-
13 ronmental review, preliminary engineering and de-
14 sign work, and other preconstruction activities; and

15 (2) construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation,
16 acquisition of real property (including land related
17 to the project and improvements to the land), envi-
18 ronmental mitigation, construction contingencies, ac-
19 quisition of equipment, and operational improve-
20 ments directly related to improving system perform-
21 ance.

22 (f) PROJECT REQUIREMENTS.—The Secretary may
23 select a project for funding under the Program only if the
24 Secretary determines that—

1 (1) the project will generate national and re-
2 gional economic, mobility, or safety benefits;

3 (2) the project will be cost effective and have a
4 measurable return on investment;

5 (3) the project will contribute to the accom-
6 plishment of one or more of the goals described
7 under subsection (a)(2);

8 (4) the project is based on the results of pre-
9 liminary engineering;

10 (5) with respect to related non-Federal financial
11 commitments—

12 (A) one or more stable and dependable
13 sources of funding and financing are available
14 to construct, maintain, and operate the project;
15 and

16 (B) contingency amounts are available to
17 cover unanticipated cost increases;

18 (6) the project cannot be easily and efficiently
19 completed without Federal funding or financial as-
20 sistance available to the project sponsor; and

21 (7) the project is reasonably expected to begin
22 construction not later than 18 months after the date
23 of obligation of funds for the project.

24 (g) PRIORITY CONSIDERATION.—In making a grant
25 under the Program, the Secretary shall give priority to—

1 (1) a project for which non-Federal contribu-
2 tions exceed 25 percent of the costs of the project;
3 and

4 (2) a project in an area with an unemployment
5 rate that exceeds the national average.

6 (h) FEDERAL SHARE.—

7 (1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in para-
8 graph (2), the Federal share of the cost of a project
9 assisted with a grant under the Program may not
10 exceed 75 percent.

11 (2) MAXIMUM FEDERAL INVOLVEMENT.—Fed-
12 eral assistance other than a grant under the Pro-
13 gram may be used to satisfy the non-Federal share
14 of the cost of a project for which such a grant is
15 made, except that the total Federal assistance pro-
16 vided for a project receiving a grant under the Pro-
17 gram may not exceed 80 percent of the total project
18 cost.

19 (i) CONSULTATION.—In carrying out the Program,
20 the Secretary shall consult with the heads of other Federal
21 departments and agencies as appropriate.

22 (j) CONGRESSIONAL NOTIFICATION.—

23 (1) NOTIFICATION.—

24 (A) REQUIREMENT.—At least 60 days be-
25 fore making a grant for a project under the

1 Program, the Secretary shall notify, in writing,
2 the Committee on Transportation and Infra-
3 structure, the Committee on Agriculture, and
4 the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the
5 House of Representatives and the Committee
6 on Environment and Public Works, the Com-
7 mittee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry,
8 and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and
9 Transportation of the Senate of the proposed
10 grant.

11 (B) CONTENTS.—A notification under sub-
12 paragraph (A) shall include an evaluation and
13 justification for the relevant project and the
14 amount of the proposed grant award.

15 (2) CONGRESSIONAL DISAPPROVAL.—The Sec-
16 retary may not make a grant or any other obligation
17 or commitment to fund a project under the Program
18 if a joint resolution is enacted disapproving funding
19 for the project before the last day of the 60-day pe-
20 riod described in paragraph (1).

21 (k) REPORTS.—

22 (1) ANNUAL REPORT.—The Secretary shall
23 make available on the website of the Department of
24 Transportation at the end of each fiscal year an an-
25 nual report that lists each project for which a grant

1 has been provided under the Program during that
2 fiscal year.

3 (2) COMPTROLLER GENERAL.—

4 (A) ASSESSMENT.—The Comptroller Gen-
5 eral of the United States shall conduct an as-
6 sessment of the administrative establishment,
7 solicitation, selection, and justification process
8 with respect to grants under the Program.

9 (B) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after
10 the initial awarding of grants under the Pro-
11 gram, the Comptroller General shall submit to
12 the Committee on Transportation and Infra-
13 structure, the Committee on Agriculture, and
14 the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the
15 House of Representatives and the Committee
16 on Environment and Public Works, the Com-
17 mittee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry,
18 and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and
19 Transportation of the Senate a report that de-
20 scribes—

21 (i) the adequacy and fairness of the
22 process by which each project selected for
23 a grant under the Program was selected;
24 and

1 (ii) the justification and criteria used
2 for the selection of each such project.

3 **SEC. 3. SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BLOCK GRANT PRO-**
4 **GRAM.**

5 (a) STP SET-ASIDE.—Section 133(h) of title 23,
6 United States Code, is amended—

7 (1) by striking paragraphs (2) through (7); and
8 (2) by adding at the end the following:

9 “(2) USE OF FUNDS.—Funds reserved under
10 paragraph (1) shall be used by the Secretary to
11 carry out and make grants under the Revitalize
12 Rural America Grant Program.”.

13 (b) TREATMENT OF PROJECTS.—Section 133(i) of
14 title 23, United States Code, is amended by striking “(ex-
15 cluding those carried out under subsection (h)(5))”.

16 **SEC. 4. ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR REVITALIZE RURAL**
17 **AMERICA GRANT PROGRAM.**

18 (a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
19 authorized to be appropriated to carry out the Revitalize
20 Rural America Grant Program (established under section
21 2 of this Act) \$1,301,785,760 for each of fiscal years 2019
22 and 2020.

23 (b) CAPITAL INVESTMENT GRANTS.—Section
24 5338(d) of title 49, United States Code, is amended by

- 1 striking “through 2020” and inserting “through 2018 and
- 2 \$1,000,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 and 2020”.

