

115TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 5213

To prohibit the Rural Utilities Service from providing assistance for the provision of broadband service with a download speed of less than 25 megabits per second or an upload speed of less than 3 megabits per second, and clarify the broadband loan and loan guarantee authority provided in section 601 of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 8, 2018

Mrs. HARTZLER introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture, 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 prohibit the Rural Utilities Service from providing assistance for the provision of broadband service with a download speed of less than 25 megabits per second or an upload speed of less than 3 megabits per second, and clarify the broadband loan and loan guarantee authority provided in section 601 of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936, 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,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Expanding Rural Ac-
3 cess to Broadband Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. REQUIRED MINIMUM SPEED OF BROADBAND**
5 **INTERNET ACCESS SERVICE FOR RURAL**
6 **UTILITIES SERVICE BROADBAND INTERNET**
7 **ACCESS SERVICE DEPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE**
8 **PROGRAMS.**

9 (a) PROHIBITION.—The Rural Utilities Service may
10 not, under section 601 of the Rural Electrification Act of
11 1936, the Community Connect Broadband Grant Pro-
12 gram, the Telecommunications Infrastructure Loan and
13 Loan Guarantee Program, or the Distance Learning and
14 Telemedicine Program, provide assistance for the provi-
15 sion of broadband service (as defined in section 601(b)(1)
16 of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936) with a download
17 speed of less than 25 megabits per second or an upload
18 speed of less than 3 megabits per second.

19 (b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Section 601(e)(1)
20 of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C.
21 950bb(e)(1)) is amended—

22 (1) in subparagraph (A), by striking “4” and
23 inserting “25”; and

24 (2) in subparagraph (B), by striking “1” and
25 inserting “3”.

1 **SEC. 3. CLARIFICATION OF BROADBAND LOAN AND LOAN**
2 **GUARANTEE AUTHORITY.**

3 Section 601(c)(1) of the Rural Electrification Act of
4 1936 (7 U.S.C. 950bb(c)(1)) is amended by striking
5 “make or guarantee loans” and inserting “shall make
6 loans and shall guarantee loans”.

7 **SEC. 4. REPORT.**

8 Within 12 months after the date of the enactment
9 of this Act, the Administrator of the Rural Utilities Serv-
10 ice (in this section referred to as the “RUS”) shall submit
11 to the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Rep-
12 resentatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition,
13 and Forestry of the Senate a written report on the effec-
14 tiveness of RUS loan and loan guarantee programs for
15 the purpose of expanding broadband to rural areas (as de-
16 fined in RUS regulations), which shall—

17 (1) identify administrative and legislative op-
18 tions for incentivizing private investment by utilizing
19 RUS loan guarantee programs for the purpose of ex-
20 panding broadband to rural areas;

21 (2) evaluate the existing borrower and lending
22 guidelines for RUS loan and loan guarantee appli-
23 cants to incentivize participation in both programs;
24 and

25 (3) evaluate the loan and loan guarantee appli-
26 cation processes for lenders and borrowers by elimi-

1 nating burdensome and unnecessary steps in the ap-
2 plication process and providing a more streamlined
3 process to decrease the complexity of the application
4 and the timeline from application to approval or de-
5 nial.

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