

.....
(Original Signature of Member)

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 4374

To bolster certain rural broadband programs of the Department of
Agriculture.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. DAVID SCOTT of Georgia introduced the following bill; which was referred
to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To bolster certain rural broadband programs of the
Department of Agriculture.

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 “Broadband Internet
5 Connections for Rural America Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. INNOVATIVE BROADBAND ADVANCEMENT PRO-**
7 **GRAM.**

8 Section 603(e) of the Rural Electrification Act of
9 1936 (7 U.S.C. 950bb-2(e)) is amended to read as follows:

1 “(e) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

2 “(1) IN GENERAL.—There is authorized to be
3 appropriated to the Secretary \$300,000,000 for each
4 of fiscal years 2022 through 2030, to remain avail-
5 able until expended, to carry out projects in accord-
6 ance with this section—

7 “(A) in the case of fiscal year 2022, in 15
8 States, including Maine, Pennsylvania, Virginia,
9 California, Georgia, Texas, Florida, Minnesota,
10 South Carolina, Wyoming, Iowa, and West Vir-
11 ginia; and

12 “(B) in the case of each of fiscal years
13 2023 through 2030, in States selected by the
14 Secretary to be diverse on the basis of geog-
15 raphy, topography, and demographics.

16 “(2) LIMITATION.—Not more than \$25,000,000
17 of the amounts made available under paragraph (1)
18 for each fiscal year may be provided for a single
19 project.”.

20 **SEC. 3. RURAL BROADBAND PROGRAM LOANS AND**
21 **GRANTS.**

22 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 601 of the Rural Elec-
23 trification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 950bb) is amended—

24 (1) in the section heading, by striking “AC-
25 **CESS TO BROADBAND TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

1 **SERVICES IN RURAL AREAS**” and inserting “**RE-**
2 **CONNECT RURAL BROADBAND PROGRAM**”;

3 (2) by striking subsection (a) and inserting the
4 following:

5 “(a) **ESTABLISHMENT; PURPOSE.**—The Secretary
6 shall establish a program, which shall be known as the
7 ‘ReConnect Rural Broadband Program’, to provide grants,
8 loans, and loan guarantees to finance the costs of the con-
9 struction, improvement, and acquisition of facilities and
10 equipment for broadband service in rural areas.”;

11 (3) in subsection (c)(2), by striking subpara-
12 graphs (A) and (B) and inserting the following:

13 “(A) **IN GENERAL.**—In making grants,
14 making loans, and guaranteeing loans under
15 paragraph (1), the Secretary shall give the
16 highest priority to applications for projects to
17 provide broadband service to unserved rural
18 communities that do not have any residential
19 broadband service of at least—

20 “(i) a 10-Mbps downstream trans-
21 mission capacity; and

22 “(ii) a 1-Mbps upstream transmission
23 capacity.

24 “(B) **OTHER.**—After giving priority to the
25 applications described in clauses (i) and (ii) of

1 subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall then give
2 priority to applications for projects to provide
3 broadband service to rural communities—

4 “(i) with a population of less than
5 10,000 permanent residents; and

6 “(ii) with a high percentage of low in-
7 come families or persons (as defined in
8 section 501(b) of the Housing Act of 1949
9 (42 U.S.C. 1471(b)).

10 “(C) ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS.—In
11 making grants, making loans, and guaranteeing
12 loans under this subsection, the Secretary shall
13 consider whether an application was developed
14 with the participation of community stake-
15 holders, and will receive a substantial portion of
16 the funding for the project from community
17 stakeholders or other non-Federal sources.”;

18 (4) in subsection (c)(3)—

19 (A) in subparagraph (D)(i)—

20 (i) in subclause (I), by striking
21 “(2)(A)(i)” and inserting “(2)(A)”; and

22 (ii) in subclause (II), by striking “any
23 of subclauses (I) through (IV) of para-
24 graph (2)(B)(i)” and inserting “clause (i)
25 or (ii) of paragraph (2)(B)”; and

1 (B) by striking subparagraph (E) and in-
2 sserting the following:

3 “(E) APPLICATIONS.—

4 “(i) GRANT-ONLY APPLICATIONS.—

5 The Secretary shall establish an applica-
6 tion process that permits an application for
7 a grant-only award.

8 “(ii) COMBINED APPLICATIONS.—The
9 Secretary shall establish an application
10 process that permits—

11 “(I) a single application for a
12 grant and a loan under title I or II,
13 or this title, that is associated with
14 the grant; and

15 “(II) provides a single decision to
16 award the grant and the loan.”;

17 (5) in subsection (d)(2)—

18 (A) in subparagraph (A)—

19 (i) by striking “subparagraphs (B)
20 and (C)” and inserting “subparagraph
21 (B)”;

22 (ii) by striking “—” and all that fol-
23 lows through “(i)”;

24 (iii) by striking the semicolon and all
25 that follows through “providers”;

1 (B) in subparagraph (B), by striking
2 “(A)(i)” and inserting “(A)”; and

3 (C) by striking subparagraph (C);
4 (6) in subsection (d), by striking paragraph (5);
5 (7) in subsection (j)(1)—

6 (A) by striking “\$350,000,000” and in-
7 serting “\$5,250,000,000”;

8 (B) by striking “2019 through 2023” and
9 inserting “2022 through 2030”; and

10 (C) by striking “until expended” and in-
11 serting “for 2 fiscal years after the fiscal year
12 for which appropriated”; and

13 (8) in subsection (k), by striking “2023” and
14 inserting “2030”.

15 (b) SUNSET.—The authorities provided by section
16 779 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 (Public
17 Law 115–141) shall have no force or effect after June
18 30, 2022.

19 (c) TRANSITION RULES.—

20 (1) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS FOR ADMINISTRA-
21 TIVE COSTS.—Not more than 1 percent of the unob-
22 ligated balances of amounts made available as of
23 June 1, 2022, to carry out the pilot program de-
24 scribed in section 779 of the Consolidated Appro-
25 priations Act, 2018 (Public Law 115–141) may be

1 used for the costs of transitioning from the pilot
2 program to the program under section 601 of the
3 Rural Electrification Act of 1936, as amended by
4 this Act.

5 (2) CONSOLIDATION OF FUNDS.—

6 (A) IN GENERAL.—The unobligated bal-
7 ances of all amounts made available on or be-
8 fore June 30, 2023, to carry out the pilot pro-
9 gram described in section 779 of the Consoli-
10 dated Appropriations Act, 2018 (Public Law
11 115–141) that are in excess of the amount de-
12 scribed in subparagraph (B) of this paragraph
13 are hereby transferred to and merged with
14 amounts made available to carry out the pro-
15 gram authorized under section 601 of the Rural
16 Electrification Act of 1936.

17 (B) UNFUNDED APPROVALS.—The amount
18 described in this subparagraph is the amount
19 required to fully fund each project approved as
20 of June 30, 2023, under the pilot program de-
21 scribed in such section 779 for which amounts
22 were not obligated or partially obligated as of
23 such date.

1 **SEC. 4. COMMUNITY CONNECT GRANTS.**

2 Section 604(g) of the Rural Electrification Act of
3 1936 (7 U.S.C. 950bb-3(g)) is amended by striking
4 “\$50,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023”
5 and inserting “\$150,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2022
6 through 2030, to remain available for 2 fiscal years after
7 the fiscal year for which appropriated”; and

8 **SEC. 5. DISTANCE LEARNING AND TELEMEDICINE LOANS**
9 **AND GRANTS.**

10 Section 2335A of the Food Agriculture, Conserva-
11 tion, and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 950aaa-5) is
12 amended by striking “\$82,000,000 for each of fiscal years
13 2019 through 2023” and inserting “\$150,000,000, to re-
14 main available for 2 fiscal years after the fiscal year for
15 which appropriated”.

16 **SEC. 6. EXPANSION OF MIDDLE MILE INFRASTRUCTURE**
17 **INTO RURAL AREAS.**

18 Section 602(g) of the Rural Electrification Act of
19 1936 (7 U.S.C. 950bb-1(g)) is amended by striking
20 “\$10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2018 through 2023”
21 and inserting “\$300,000,000 for each fiscal year, to re-
22 main available for 2 fiscal years after the fiscal year for
23 which appropriated”.

24 **SEC. 7. BROADBAND CONNECTORS PROGRAM.**

25 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Agriculture shall
26 establish a system for the dissemination of information

1 and technical assistance on the broadband programs of the
2 Department of Agriculture, which shall be for the use of
3 entities eligible to receive funds under title II or VI of
4 the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 901 et
5 seq.) or chapter 1 of subtitle D of title XXIII of the Food,
6 Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990 (7
7 U.S.C. 950aaa et seq.).

8 (b) LIMITATIONS ON AUTHORIZATION OF APPRO-
9 PRIATIONS.—To carry out subsection (a), there are au-
10 thorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of Agriculture
11 not more than \$25,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2022
12 through 2030, which are authorized to remain available
13 through fiscal year 2030.

14 **SEC. 8. COMMUNITY BROADBAND MAPPING.**

15 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This section may be cited as the
16 “Community Broadband Mapping Act”.

17 (b) RURAL BROADBAND ACCESS GRANTS.—Section
18 601 of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C.
19 950bb) is amended by adding at the end the following:

20 “(1) AUTHORITY TO MAKE GRANTS TO CERTAIN EN-
21 TITIES TO COLLECT BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE
22 DATA.—

23 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other
24 provision of this section, the Secretary may make a
25 grant under this section to a unit of local govern-

1 ment, a tribal government or a unit of tribal govern-
2 ment, an economic development or other community
3 organization, an electric cooperative (as defined in
4 section 3 of the Federal Power Act) that sells elec-
5 tric energy to persons in rural areas, a telephone co-
6 operative, or an internet service provider that has
7 not more than 100,000 subscribers, for the purpose
8 of enabling the collection of data relating to where
9 broadband infrastructure is located, cost of
10 broadband service, cost of such service by tier of
11 service, actual speed available at household, speed
12 advertised, and which homes are provided with non-
13 satellite broadband service, without regard to any
14 household service percentage requirement, and in de-
15 termining the eligibility of any such entity for such
16 a grant, the term ‘rural area’ means an area that is
17 not in an urbanized area or urban cluster with a
18 population of 25,000 or more as determined by the
19 Bureau of the Census.

20 “(2) LIMITATION ON GRANT AMOUNT.—The
21 amount of a grant made under this subsection shall
22 not exceed \$50,000.

23 “(3) LIMITATION ON AMOUNT AVAILABLE FOR
24 GRANTS.—The Secretary may use not more than 1
25 percent of the amounts made available under this

1 section for each fiscal year to carry out this sub-
2 section.”.

3 (c) EXPANSION OF MIDDLE MILE INFRASTRUCTURE
4 INTO RURAL AREAS GRANTS.—Section 602 of the Rural
5 Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 950bb–1) is amend-
6 ed by adding at the end the following:

7 “(h) AUTHORITY TO MAKE GRANTS TO CERTAIN EN-
8 TITIES TO COLLECT BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE
9 DATA.—

10 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other
11 provision of this section, the Secretary may make a
12 grant under this section to a unit of local govern-
13 ment, a tribal government or a unit of tribal govern-
14 ment, an economic development or other community
15 organization, an electric cooperative (as defined in
16 section 3 of the Federal Power Act) that sells elec-
17 tric energy to persons in rural areas, a telephone co-
18 operative, or an internet service provider that has
19 not more than 100,000 subscribers, for the purpose
20 of enabling the collection of data relating to where
21 broadband infrastructure is located, cost of
22 broadband service, cost of such service by tier of
23 service, actual speed available at household, speed
24 advertised, and which homes are provided with non-
25 satellite broadband service, without regard to any

1 household service percentage requirement, and in de-
2 termining the eligibility of any such entity for such
3 a grant, the term ‘rural area’ means an area that is
4 not in an urbanized area or urban cluster with a
5 population of 25,000 or more as determined by the
6 Bureau of the Census.

7 “(2) LIMITATION ON GRANT AMOUNT.—The
8 amount of a grant made under this subsection shall
9 not exceed \$50,000.

10 “(3) LIMITATION ON AMOUNT AVAILABLE FOR
11 GRANTS.—The Secretary may use not more than 1
12 percent of the amounts made available under this
13 section for each fiscal year to carry out this sub-
14 section.”.

15 (d) INNOVATIVE BROADBAND ADVANCEMENT
16 GRANTS.—Section 603 of the Rural Electrification Act of
17 1936 (7 U.S.C. 950bb-2), as amended by section 2 of this
18 Act, is amended by adding at the end the following:

19 “(f) AUTHORITY TO MAKE GRANTS TO CERTAIN EN-
20 TITIES TO COLLECT BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE
21 DATA.—

22 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other
23 provision of this section, the Secretary may make a
24 grant under this section to a unit of local govern-
25 ment, a tribal government or a unit of tribal govern-

1 ment, an economic development or other community
2 organization, an electric cooperative (as defined in
3 section 3 of the Federal Power Act) that sells elec-
4 tric energy to persons in rural areas, a telephone co-
5 operative, or an internet service provider that has
6 not more than 100,000 subscribers, for the purpose
7 of enabling the collection of data relating to where
8 broadband infrastructure is located, cost of
9 broadband service, cost of such service by tier of
10 service, actual speed available at household, speed
11 advertised, and which homes are provided with non-
12 satellite broadband service, without regard to any
13 household service percentage requirement, and in de-
14 termining the eligibility of any such entity for such
15 a grant, the term ‘rural area’ means an area that is
16 not in an urbanized area or urban cluster with a
17 population of 25,000 or more as determined by the
18 Bureau of the Census.

19 “(2) LIMITATION ON GRANT AMOUNT.—The
20 amount of a grant made under this subsection shall
21 not exceed \$50,000.

22 “(3) LIMITATION ON AMOUNT AVAILABLE FOR
23 GRANTS.—The Secretary may use not more than 1
24 percent of the amounts made available under this

1 section for each fiscal year to carry out this sub-
2 section.”.

3 (e) COMMUNITY CONNECT GRANTS.—Section 604 of
4 the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 950bb-
5 3) is amended by adding at the end the following:

6 “(h) AUTHORITY TO MAKE GRANTS TO CERTAIN EN-
7 TITIES TO COLLECT BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE
8 DATA.—

9 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other
10 provision of this section, the Secretary may make a
11 grant under this section to a unit of local govern-
12 ment, a tribal government or a unit of tribal govern-
13 ment, an economic development or other community
14 organization, an electric cooperative (as defined in
15 section 3 of the Federal Power Act) that sells elec-
16 tric energy to persons in rural areas, a telephone co-
17 operative, or an internet service provider that has
18 not more than 100,000 subscribers, for the purpose
19 of enabling the collection of data relating to where
20 broadband infrastructure is located, cost of
21 broadband service, cost of such service by tier of
22 service, actual speed available at household, speed
23 advertised, and which homes are provided with non-
24 satellite broadband service, without regard to any
25 household service percentage requirement, and in de-

1 termining the eligibility of any such entity for such
2 a grant, the term ‘rural area’ means an area that is
3 not in an urbanized area or urban cluster with a
4 population of 25,000 or more as determined by the
5 Bureau of the Census.

6 “(2) LIMITATION ON GRANT AMOUNT.—The
7 amount of a grant made under this subsection shall
8 not exceed \$50,000.

9 “(3) LIMITATION ON AMOUNT AVAILABLE FOR
10 GRANTS.—The Secretary may use not more than 1
11 percent of the amounts made available under this
12 section for each fiscal year to carry out this sub-
13 section.”.

14 (f) DISTANCE LEARNING AND TELEMEDICINE
15 GRANTS.—Section 2333 of the Food, Agriculture, Con-
16 servation and Trade Act of 1990 (7 U.S.C. 950aaa-2) is
17 amended by adding at the end the following:

18 “(j) AUTHORITY TO MAKE GRANTS TO CERTAIN EN-
19 TITIES TO COLLECT BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE
20 DATA.—

21 “(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other
22 provision of this section, the Secretary may make a
23 grant under this section to a unit of local govern-
24 ment, a tribal government or a unit of tribal govern-
25 ment, an economic development or other community

1 organization, an electric cooperative (as defined in
2 section 3 of the Federal Power Act) that sells elec-
3 tric energy to persons in rural areas, a telephone co-
4 operative, or an internet service provider that has
5 not more than 100,000 subscribers, for the purpose
6 of enabling the collection of data relating to where
7 broadband infrastructure is located, cost of
8 broadband service, cost of such service by tier of
9 service, actual speed available at household, speed
10 advertised, and which homes are provided with non-
11 satellite broadband service, without regard to any
12 household service percentage requirement, and in de-
13 termining the eligibility of any such entity for such
14 a grant, the term ‘rural area’ means an area that is
15 not in an urbanized area or urban cluster with a
16 population of 25,000 or more as determined by the
17 Bureau of the Census.

18 “(2) LIMITATION ON GRANT AMOUNT.—The
19 amount of a grant made under this subsection shall
20 not exceed \$50,000.

21 “(3) LIMITATION ON AMOUNT AVAILABLE FOR
22 GRANTS.—The Secretary may use not more than 1
23 percent of the amounts made available under this
24 section for each fiscal year to carry out this sub-
25 section.”.

1 (g) RECONNECT GRANTS.—Section 779 of division A
2 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 (132 Stat.
3 399; Public Law 115–141) is amended by inserting “:
4 Provided further, That, notwithstanding any other provi-
5 sion of this section, the Secretary may use not more than
6 1 percent of the amounts made available to carry out this
7 section to make grants, each not exceeding \$50,000, to
8 a unit of local government, a tribal government or a unit
9 of tribal government, an economic development or other
10 community organization, an electric cooperative (as de-
11 fined in section 3 of the Federal Power Act) that sells
12 electric energy to persons in rural areas, a telephone coop-
13 erative, or an internet service provider that has not more
14 than 100,000 subscribers, for the purpose of enabling the
15 collection of data relating to where broadband infrastruc-
16 ture is located, cost of broadband service, cost of such
17 service by tier of service, actual speed available at house-
18 hold, speed advertised, and which homes are provided with
19 non-satellite broadband service, without regard to any
20 household service percentage requirement, and in deter-
21 mining the eligibility of any such entity for such a grant,
22 the term ‘rural area’ means an area that is not in an ur-
23 banized area or urban cluster with a population of 25,000
24 or more as determined by the Bureau of the Census” be-
25 fore the period.

1 (h) EFFECTIVE DATE.—The amendments made by
2 this section shall take effect 1 year after the date of the
3 enactment of this Act.

4 **SEC. 9. LIMITATIONS ON RESERVATION OF FUNDS.**

5 Section 701(e) of the Rural Electrification Act of
6 1936 (7 U.S.C. 950cc(e)) is amended to read as follows:

7 “(e) LIMITATIONS ON RESERVATION OF FUNDS.—
8 Not less than 3 but not more than 7 percent of the
9 amounts appropriated to carry out title VI shall be set
10 aside to be used—

11 “(1) for administrative costs to carry out pro-
12 grams under title VI;

13 “(2) for technical assistance and pre-develop-
14 ment planning activities to support the most rural
15 communities;

16 “(3) to conduct oversight under title VI;

17 “(4) to implement accountability measures and
18 related activities authorized under title VI; and

19 “(5) to carry out this section.”.