

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 4235

To direct the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior to establish a wildfire technology testbed pilot program, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 21, 2023

Mrs. KIM of California (for herself and Mr. CROW) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on Agriculture, 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 Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior to establish a wildfire technology testbed pilot 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 “Wildfire Technology
5 Demonstration, Evaluation, Modernization, and Optimiza-
6 tion Act” or the “Wildfire Technology DEMO Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. PUBLIC-PRIVATE WILDFIRE TECHNOLOGY TESTBED**

2 **PARTNERSHIP.**

3 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this Act, the term:

4 (1) COVERED AGENCY.—The term “covered
5 agency” means—

6 (A) each Federal land management agency
7 (as such term is defined in the Federal Lands
8 Recreation Enhancement Act (16 U.S.C.
9 6801));

10 (B) the National Oceanic and Atmospheric
11 Administration;

12 (C) the United States Fire Administration;

13 (D) the Federal Emergency Management
14 Agency;

15 (E) the National Aeronautics and Space
16 Administration;

17 (F) the Bureau of Indian Affairs; and

18 (G) any other Federal agency involved in
19 wildfire response.

20 (2) COVERED ENTITY.—The term “covered en-
21 tity” means—

22 (A) a private entity;

23 (B) a nonprofit organization; or

24 (C) an institution of higher education (as
25 defined in section 101 of the Higher Education
26 Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001)).

1 (3) SECRETARIES.—The term “Secretaries”
2 means the Secretary of Agriculture and the Sec-
3 retary of the Interior, acting jointly.

4 (4) TESTBED PILOT PROGRAM.—The term
5 “Testbed Pilot Program” means the testbed pilot
6 program developed under subsection (b).

7 (b) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 60 days after the
8 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretaries, in co-
9 ordination with the heads of the covered agencies, shall
10 establish a testbed pilot program for new and innovative
11 wildfire prevention, detection, communication, and mitiga-
12 tion technologies.

13 (c) FUNCTIONS.—In carrying out the Testbed Pilot
14 Program, the Secretaries shall—

15 (1) incorporate the Testbed Pilot Program into
16 an existing interagency coordinating group on
17 wildfires;

18 (2) in consultation with the heads of covered
19 agencies, identify key technology priority areas with
20 respect to the deployment of wildfire prevention, de-
21 tection, communication, and mitigation technologies,
22 including—

23 (A) hazardous fuels reduction treatments
24 or activities;

25 (B) dispatch communications;

1 (C) remote sensing and tracking;

2 (D) safety equipment; and

3 (E) common operating pictures or oper-
4 ational dashboards; and

5 (3) partner each covered entity selected to par-
6 ticipate in the Testbed Pilot Program with the ap-
7 propriate covered agency to coordinate real-time and
8 on-the-ground testing of technology during wildland
9 fire mitigation activities and training.

10 (d) APPLICATIONS.—To participate in the Testbed
11 Pilot Program, a covered entity shall submit to the Secre-
12 taries an application at such time, in such manner, and
13 containing such information as the Secretaries may re-
14 quire, which shall include a proposal to test technologies
15 specific to key technology priority areas identified under
16 subsection (c)(2).

17 (e) PRIORITIZATION OF EMERGING TECH-
18 NOLOGIES.—In selecting covered entities to participate in
19 the Testbed Pilot Program, the Secretaries shall give pri-
20 ority to covered entities developing and applying emerging
21 technologies, including artificial intelligence, quantum
22 sensing, computing and quantum-hybrid applications, aug-
23 mented reality, and 5G private networks and device-to-de-
24 vice communications supporting nomadic mesh networks,
25 for wildfire mitigation.

1 (f) OUTREACH.—The Secretaries, in coordination
2 with the heads of covered agencies, shall make public the
3 key technology priority areas identified under subsection
4 (c)(2) and invite covered entities to apply to test and dem-
5 onstrate their technologies to address those priority areas.

6 (g) REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.—Not later
7 than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act,
8 and each year thereafter for the duration of the Testbed
9 Pilot Program, the Secretaries shall submit to the Com-
10 mittees on Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Science,
11 Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives
12 a report that includes the following with respect to the
13 Testbed Pilot Program:

14 (1) A list of participating covered entities.

15 (2) A brief description of the technologies test-
16 ed by such covered entities.

17 (3) An estimate of the cost of acquiring the
18 technology tested in the program and applying it at
19 scale.

20 (4) Outreach efforts by Federal agencies to cov-
21 ered entities developing wildfire technologies.

22 (5) Assessments of, and recommendations relat-
23 ing to, new technologies with potential adoption and
24 application at-scale in Federal land management

1 agencies' wildfire prevention, detection, communica-
2 tion, and mitigation efforts.

3 (h) TERMINATION.—The Testbed Pilot Program
4 shall expire 4 years after the date of its establishment
5 under subsection (b).

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