

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1482

To provide guidance for and investment in the upgrade and modernization of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Weather Radio All Hazards network, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 9, 2023

Mrs. BICE (for herself, Ms. SHERRILL, Mr. MILLER of Ohio, Ms. BONAMICI, and Mr. KILMER) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

A BILL

To provide guidance for and investment in the upgrade and modernization of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Weather Radio All Hazards network, 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 “NOAA Weather Radio
5 Modernization Act of 2023” or the “NWR Modernization
6 Act of 2023”.

7 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

8 In this Act:

1 (1) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term “Adminis-
2 trator” means the Under Secretary of Commerce for
3 Oceans and Atmosphere and the Administrator of
4 the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administra-
5 tion.

6 (2) NOAA WEATHER RADIO.—The term
7 “NOAA Weather Radio” means the National Oce-
8 anic and Atmospheric Administration Weather Radio
9 All Hazards network.

10 **SEC. 3. FINDINGS.**

11 Congress finds the following:

12 (1) The NOAA Weather Radio is a nationwide
13 network of transmitters that are critical to pro-
14 tecting life and property by broadcasting weather
15 and other hazard alerts.

16 (2) NOAA Weather Radio broadcasts currently
17 reach 95 percent of the United States population.

18 (3) NOAA Weather Radio broadcasts originate
19 from all National Weather Service Offices, but are
20 only available via a receiver located in sufficient
21 proximity to a radio transmitting tower.

22 (4) There are limited options to obtain NOAA
23 Weather Radio broadcasts via the Internet or mobile
24 device application, which are provided by volunteer

1 mechanisms obtaining the audio feed in an ad hoc
2 manner.

3 (5) NOAA Weather Radio should provide equal
4 access and availability to unimpeded broadcasts of
5 weather and non-weather hazards to every person lo-
6 cated within the United States, its territories, and
7 Tribal lands.

8 **SEC. 4. UPGRADING EXISTING SYSTEMS.**

9 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall, to the
10 maximum extent practicable, expand coverage of the
11 NOAA Weather Radio and ensure its reliability. In car-
12 rying out this subsection, the Administrator shall—

13 (1) maintain support for existing systems serv-
14 ing areas not covered by or having poor quality cel-
15 lular service;

16 (2) ensure consistent maintenance and oper-
17 ations monitoring, with timely repairs to broadcast
18 transmitter site equipment and antennas; and

19 (3) enhance the ability to amplify Non-Weather
20 Emergency Messages via NOAA Weather Radio as
21 necessary.

22 (b) EXPANDING ACCESS.—In carrying out subsection
23 (a), the Administrator shall acquire additional transmit-
24 ters as required to expand coverage to rural and under-
25 served communities, national parks, and recreation areas.

1 **SEC. 5. MODERNIZATION INITIATIVE.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—In parallel to the activities under
3 section 4, the Administrator shall, to the maximum extent
4 practicable, enhance NOAA Weather Radio to ensure its
5 capabilities and coverage remain valuable to the public. In
6 carrying out this section, the Administrator shall—

7 (1) upgrade telecommunications infrastructure
8 to accelerate the transition of broadcasts to internet
9 protocol-based communications over noncopper
10 media;

11 (2) accelerate software upgrades to the Ad-
12 vanced Weather Interactive Processing System, or
13 the relevant system successors, to implement partial
14 county notifications and alerts;

15 (3) consult with relevant stakeholders, including
16 the private sector, to enhance accessibility and
17 usability of NOAA Weather Radio data and feeds;

18 (4) develop options, including satellite backup
19 capability and commercial provider partnerships, for
20 NOAA Weather Radio continuity in the event of
21 Weather Forecast Office outages;

22 (5) research and develop alternative options, in-
23 cluding microwave capabilities, to transmit NOAA
24 Weather Radio signals to transmitters that are re-
25 mote or do not have internet protocol capability; and

1 (6) transition critical applications to the Inte-
2 grated Dissemination Program, or the relevant pro-
3 gram successors.

4 (b) PRIORITY.—In carrying out subsection (a), the
5 Administrator shall prioritize practices, capabilities, and
6 technologies recommended in accordance with the assess-
7 ment under subsection (c) to maximize accessibility, par-
8 ticularly in remote and underserved areas of the country.

9 (c) ASSESSMENT FOR MANAGEMENT AND DISTRIBUTION.—Not later than 12 months after the date of the
10 enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall complete
11 an assessment of access to NOAA Weather Radio. In con-
12 ducting such assessment, the Administrator shall take into
13 consideration and provide recommendations on the fol-
14 lowing:
15

16 (1) The need for continuous, adequate, and
17 operational real-time broadcasts of the NOAA
18 Weather Radio in both urban and rural areas.

19 (2) Solicited inputs from relevant stakeholders
20 on the compatibility of NOAA Weather Radio data
21 for third party platforms that provide online serv-
22 ices, such as websites and mobile device applications,
23 or deliver NOAA Weather Radio access.

1 (3) Existing or new management systems that
2 promote consistent, efficient, and compatible access
3 to NOAA Weather Radio.

4 (4) The ability of NOAA to aggregate real time
5 broadcast feeds at one or more central locations.

6 (5) Effective interagency coordination.

7 (6) The potential effects of an electromagnetic
8 pulse or geomagnetic disturbance on NOAA Weather
9 Radio.

10 (7) Any other function the Administrator deter-
11 mines necessary.

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