

Suspend the Rules And Pass the Bill, H.R. 4881, with Amendments

(The amendments strike all after the enacting clause and insert a new text and a new title)

115TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. R. 4881

To require the Federal Communications Commission to establish a task force for meeting the connectivity and technology needs of precision agriculture in the United States.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 25, 2018

Mr. LATTA (for himself and Mr. LOEBSACK) introduced the following bill;
which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

A BILL

To require the Federal Communications Commission to establish a task force for meeting the connectivity and technology needs of precision agriculture in the United States.

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 “Precision Agriculture
5 Connectivity Act of 2018”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress finds the following:

3 (1) Precision agriculture technologies and prac-
4 tices allow farmers to significantly increase crop
5 yields, eliminate overlap in operations, and reduce
6 inputs such as seed, fertilizer, pesticides, water, and
7 fuel.

8 (2) These technologies allow farmers to collect
9 data in real time about their fields, automate field
10 management, and maximize resources.

11 (3) Studies estimate that precision agriculture
12 technologies can reduce agricultural operation costs
13 by up to 25 dollars per acre and increase farm yields
14 by up to 70 percent by 2050.

15 (4) The critical cost savings and productivity
16 benefits of precision agriculture cannot be realized
17 without the availability of reliable broadband Inter-
18 net access service delivered to the agricultural land
19 of the United States.

20 (5) The deployment of broadband Internet ac-
21 cess service to unserved agricultural land is critical
22 to the United States economy and to the continued
23 leadership of the United States in global food pro-
24 duction.

25 (6) Despite the growing demand for broadband
26 Internet access service on agricultural land,

1 broadband Internet access service is not consistently
2 available where needed for agricultural operations.

3 (7) The Federal Communications Commission
4 has an important role to play in the deployment of
5 broadband Internet access service on unserved agri-
6 cultural land to promote precision agriculture.

7 **SEC. 3. TASK FORCE.**

8 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

9 (1) the term “broadband Internet access serv-
10 ice”—

11 (A) means a mass-market retail service by
12 wire or radio that provides the capability to
13 transmit data to and receive data from all or
14 substantially all Internet endpoints, including
15 any capabilities that are incidental to and en-
16 able the operation of the communications serv-
17 ice, but excluding dial-up Internet access serv-
18 ice; and

19 (B) also encompasses any service that the
20 Commission finds to be providing a functional
21 equivalent of the service described in subpara-
22 graph (A);

23 (2) the term “Commission” means the Federal
24 Communications Commission;

1 (3) the term “Department” means the Depart-
2 ment of Agriculture;

3 (4) the term “Secretary” means the Secretary
4 of Agriculture; and

5 (5) the term “Task Force” means the Task
6 Force for Reviewing the Connectivity and Tech-
7 nology Needs of Precision Agriculture in the United
8 States established under subsection (b).

9 (b) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 1 year after
10 the date of enactment of this Act, the Commission shall
11 establish the Task Force for Reviewing the Connectivity
12 and Technology Needs of Precision Agriculture in the
13 United States.

14 (c) DUTIES.—

15 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Task Force shall con-
16 sult with the Secretary, or a designee of the Sec-
17 retary, and collaborate with public and private
18 stakeholders in the agriculture and technology fields
19 to—

20 (A) identify and measure current gaps in
21 the availability of broadband Internet access
22 service on agricultural land;

23 (B) develop policy recommendations to
24 promote the rapid, expanded deployment of
25 broadband Internet access service on unserved

1 agricultural land, with a goal of achieving reli-
2 able capabilities on 95 percent of agricultural
3 land in the United States by 2025;

4 (C) promote effective policy and regulatory
5 solutions that encourage the adoption of
6 broadband Internet access service on farms and
7 ranches and promote precision agriculture;

8 (D) recommend specific new rules or
9 amendments to existing rules of the Commis-
10 sion that the Commission should issue to
11 achieve the goals and purposes of the policy rec-
12 ommendations described in subparagraph (B);

13 (E) recommend specific steps that the
14 Commission should take to obtain reliable and
15 standardized data measurements of the avail-
16 ability of broadband Internet access service as
17 may be necessary to target funding support,
18 from future programs of the Commission dedi-
19 cated to the deployment of broadband Internet
20 access service, to unserved agricultural land in
21 need of broadband Internet access service; and

22 (F) recommend specific steps that the
23 Commission should consider to ensure that the
24 expertise of the Secretary and available farm
25 data are reflected in future programs of the

1 Commission dedicated to the infrastructure de-
2 ployment of broadband Internet access service
3 and to direct available funding to unserved ag-
4 ricultural land where needed.

5 (2) NO DUPLICATE DATA REPORTING.—In per-
6 forming the duties of the Commission under para-
7 graph (1), the Commission shall ensure that no pro-
8 vider of broadband Internet access service is re-
9 quired to report data to the Commission that is, on
10 the day before the date of enactment of this Act, re-
11 quired to be reported by the provider of broadband
12 Internet access service.

13 (3) HOLD HARMLESS.—The Task Force and
14 the Commission shall not interpret the phrase “fu-
15 ture programs of the Commission”, as used in sub-
16 paragraphs (E) and (F) of paragraph (1), to include
17 the universal service programs of the Commission
18 established under section 254 of the Communica-
19 tions Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 254).

20 (4) CONSULTATION.—The Secretary, or a des-
21 ignee of the Secretary, shall explain and make avail-
22 able to the Task Force the expertise, data mapping
23 information, and resources of the Department that
24 the Department uses to identify cropland, ranchland,
25 and other areas with agricultural operations that

1 may be helpful in developing the recommendations
2 required under paragraph (1).

3 (5) LIST OF AVAILABLE FEDERAL PROGRAMS
4 AND RESOURCES.—Not later than 180 days after
5 the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary and
6 the Commission shall jointly submit to the Task
7 Force a list of all Federal programs or resources
8 available for the expansion of broadband Internet ac-
9 cess service on unserved agricultural land to assist
10 the Task Force in carrying out the duties of the
11 Task Force.

12 (d) MEMBERSHIP.—

13 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Task Force shall be—

14 (A) composed of not more than 15 voting
15 members who shall—

16 (i) be selected by the Chairman of the
17 Commission, in consultation with the Sec-
18 retary; and

19 (ii) include—

20 (I) agricultural producers rep-
21 resenting diverse geographic regions
22 and farm sizes, including owners and
23 operators of farms of less than 100
24 acres;

1 (II) an agricultural producer rep-
2 resenting tribal agriculture;

3 (III) Internet service providers,
4 including regional or rural fixed and
5 mobile broadband Internet access
6 service providers and telecommuni-
7 cations infrastructure providers;

8 (IV) representatives from the
9 electric cooperative industry;

10 (V) representatives from the sat-
11 ellite industry;

12 (VI) representatives from preci-
13 sion agriculture equipment manufac-
14 turers, including drone manufactur-
15 ers, manufacturers of autonomous ag-
16 ricultural machinery, and manufactur-
17 ers of farming robotics technologies;

18 (VII) representatives from State
19 and local governments; and

20 (VIII) representatives with rel-
21 evant expertise in broadband network
22 data collection, geospatial analysis,
23 and coverage mapping; and

1 (B) fairly balanced in terms of tech-
2 nologies, points of view, and fields represented
3 on the Task Force.

4 (2) PERIOD OF APPOINTMENT; VACANCIES.—

5 (A) IN GENERAL.—A member of the Task
6 Force appointed under paragraph (1)(A) shall
7 serve for a single term of 2 years.

8 (B) VACANCIES.—Any vacancy in the Task
9 Force—

10 (i) shall not affect the powers of the
11 Task Force; and

12 (ii) shall be filled in the same manner
13 as the original appointment.

14 (3) EX-OFFICIO MEMBER.—The Secretary, or a
15 designee of the Secretary, shall serve as an ex-offi-
16 cio, nonvoting member of the Task Force.

17 (e) REPORTS.—Not later than 1 year after the date
18 on which the Commission establishes the Task Force, and
19 annually thereafter, the Task Force shall submit to the
20 Chairman of the Commission a report, which shall be
21 made public not later than 30 days after the date on which
22 the Chairman receives the report, that details—

23 (1) the status of fixed and mobile broadband
24 Internet access service coverage of agricultural land;

1 (2) the projected future connectivity needs of
2 agricultural operations, farmers, and ranchers; and

3 (3) the steps being taken to accurately measure
4 the availability of broadband Internet access service
5 on agricultural land and the limitations of current,
6 as of the date of the report, measurement processes.

7 (f) **TERMINATION.**—The Commission shall renew the
8 Task Force every 2 years until the Task Force terminates
9 on January 1, 2025.

10 **SEC. 4. NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS AUTHORIZED.**

11 No additional funds are authorized to be appro-
12 priated to carry out this Act. This Act shall be carried
13 out using amounts otherwise authorized.

 Amend the title so as to read: “A bill to require the
Federal Communications Commission to establish a task
force for reviewing the connectivity and technology needs
of precision agriculture in the United States.”.