

## Union Calendar No.

117<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
1<sup>ST</sup> SESSION

# H. R. 5324

[Report No. 117-]

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.

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### IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 22, 2021

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

DECEMBER --, 2021

Reported with an amendment, committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, and ordered to be printed

[Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in italics]

[For text of introduced bill, see copy of bill as introduced on September 22, 2021]

# **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 2021” or “NWR Modernization Act*  
6 *of 2021”.*

7 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

8        (a) *ADMINISTRATOR.*—*The term “Administrator”*  
9 *means the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and*  
10 *Atmosphere and Administrator of the National Oceanic and*  
11 *Atmospheric Administration.*

12        (b) *NOAA WEATHER RADIO.*—*The term “NOAA*  
13 *Weather Radio” means the National Oceanic and Atmos-*  
14 *pheric Administration Weather Radio All Hazards net-*  
15 *work.*

16 **SEC. 3. FINDINGS.**

17        *Congress finds the following:*

18            (1) *The NOAA Weather Radio is a nationwide*  
19 *network of transmitters that are critical to protecting*  
20 *life and property by broadcasting weather and other*  
21 *hazard alerts.*

22            (2) *NOAA Weather Radio broadcasts currently*  
23 *reach 95 percent of the United States population.*

24            (3) *NOAA Weather Radio broadcasts originate*  
25 *from all National Weather Service Offices, but are*

1       *only available via a receiver located in sufficient*  
2       *proximity to a radio transmitting tower.*

3               (4) *There are limited options to obtain NOAA*  
4       *Weather Radio broadcasts via the Internet or mobile*  
5       *device application, which are provided by volunteer*  
6       *mechanisms obtaining the audio feed in an ad hoc*  
7       *manner.*

8               (5) *NOAA Weather Radio should provide equal*  
9       *access and availability to unimpeded broadcasts of*  
10       *weather and non-weather hazards to every person lo-*  
11       *cated within the United States, its territories, and*  
12       *tribal lands.*

13   **SEC. 4. UPGRADING EXISTING SYSTEMS.**

14       (a) *IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall, to the*  
15       *maximum extent practicable, expand coverage of the NOAA*  
16       *Weather Radio and ensure its reliability. In doing so, the*  
17       *Administrator shall—*

18               (1) *maintain support for existing systems serv-*  
19       *ing areas not covered by or having poor quality cel-*  
20       *lular service;*

21               (2) *ensure consistent maintenance and oper-*  
22       *ations monitoring, with timely repairs to broadcast*  
23       *transmitter site equipment and antennas; and*

1           (3) *enhance the ability to amplify Non-Weather*  
2           *Emergency Messages via NOAA Weather Radio as*  
3           *necessary.*

4           (b) *AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is*  
5           *authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section*  
6           *\$20,000,000 to remain available until expended.*

7           (c) *EXPANDING ACCESS.—As part of the activities in*  
8           *this section, the Administrator shall acquire additional*  
9           *transmitters as required to expand coverage to rural and*  
10           *underserved communities, national parks, and recreation*  
11           *areas.*

12   **SEC. 5. MODERNIZATION INITIATIVE.**

13           (a) *IN GENERAL.—In parallel to the activities under*  
14           *section 4, the Administrator shall, to the maximum extent*  
15           *practicable, enhance NOAA Weather Radio to ensure its ca-*  
16           *pabilities and coverage remain valuable to the public. In*  
17           *carrying out these activities, the Administrator shall—*

18           (1) *upgrade the telecommunications infrastruc-*  
19           *ture to accelerate the transition of broadcasts to Inter-*  
20           *net Protocol-based communications over non-copper*  
21           *media;*

22           (2) *accelerate software upgrades to the Advanced*  
23           *Weather Interactive Processing System, or the rel-*  
24           *evant system successors, in order to implement par-*  
25           *tial county notifications and alerts;*

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

4           (4) *develop options, including, but not limited*  
5 *to, satellite backup capability and commercial pro-*  
6 *vider partnerships for NOAA Weather Radio con-*  
7 *tinuity in the event of Weather Forecast Office out-*  
8 *ages;*

9           (5) *research and develop alternative options, in-*  
10 *cluding, but not limited to, microwave capabilities, to*  
11 *transmit NOAA Weather Radio signals to transmit-*  
12 *ters that are remote or do not have IP capability; and*

13           (6) *transition critical applications to the Inte-*  
14 *grated Dissemination Program, or the relevant pro-*  
15 *gram successors.*

16       (b) *PRIORITY.—In carrying out the objectives described*  
17 *in subsection (a), the Administrator shall prioritize prac-*  
18 *tices, capabilities, and technologies recommended by the as-*  
19 *essment in subsection (c), to maximize accessibility, par-*  
20 *ticularly in remote and underserved areas of the country.*

21       (c) *ASSESSMENT FOR MANAGEMENT AND DISTRIBUTION.—Not later than 12 months after the date of enact-*  
22 *ment of this Act, the Administrator shall complete an as-*  
23 *essment of access to NOAA Weather Radio. In conducting*  
24

1 *such an assessment, the Administrator shall take into con-*  
2 *sideration and provide recommendations on—*

3 *(1) the need for continuous, adequate, and oper-*  
4 *ational real-time broadcasts of the NOAA Weather*  
5 *Radio in both urban and rural areas;*

6 *(2) solicited inputs from relevant stakeholders on*  
7 *the compatibility of NOAA Weather Radio data for*  
8 *third party platforms that provide online services,*  
9 *such as websites and mobile device applications, or*  
10 *deliver NOAA Weather Radio access;*

11 *(3) existing or new management systems, which*  
12 *promote consistent, efficient, and compatible access to*  
13 *NOAA Weather Radio;*

14 *(4) the ability of NOAA to aggregate real time*  
15 *broadcast feeds at one or more central locations;*

16 *(5) effective interagency coordination;*

17 *(6) the potential effects of an electromagnetic*  
18 *pulse or geomagnetic disturbance on NOAA Weather*  
19 *Radio; and*

20 *(7) any other function the Administrator deems*  
21 *necessary.*

22 *(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is*  
23 *authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section*  
24 *\$40,000,000 to remain available until expended.*