To direct the Secretary of Transportation to establish in the Department of Transportation a drone infrastructure inspection grant program and a drone education and training grant program, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 21, 2021

Mr. STANTON (for himself and Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

MAY --, 2022

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 italic]

[For text of introduced bill, see copy of bill as introduced on September 21, 2021]
A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Transportation to establish in the Department of Transportation a drone infrastructure inspection grant program and a drone education and training grant program, and for other purposes.
Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Drone Infrastructure Inspection Grant Act”.

SEC. 2. DRONE INFRASTRUCTURE INSPECTION GRANT PROGRAM.

(a) AUTHORITY.—The Secretary of Transportation shall establish a drone infrastructure inspection grant program to make grants to governmental entities to facilitate the use of eligible small unmanned aircraft systems to increase efficiency, reduce costs, improve worker and community safety, reduce carbon emissions, or meet other priorities (as determined by the Secretary) related to critical infrastructure projects.

(b) USE OF GRANT AMOUNTS.—A governmental entity may use a grant provided under this section to—

(1) purchase or lease eligible small unmanned aircraft systems;

(2) support operational capabilities of eligible small unmanned aircraft systems by the governmental entity;

(3) contract for services performed with an eligible small unmanned aircraft system in circumstances in which the governmental entity does not have the
resources or expertise to safely carry out or assist in
carrying out the activities described under subsection
(a); and

(4) support the program management capability
of the governmental entity to use an eligible small un-
manned aircraft system.

(c) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible to receive a grant
under this section, a governmental entity shall submit an
application to the Secretary at such time, in such form,
and containing such information as the Secretary may re-
quire, including an assurance that the governmental entity
or its contractor will comply with relevant federal regula-
tions.

(d) SELECTION OF APPLICANTS.—In selecting an ap-
plicant for a grant under this section, the Secretary shall
prioritize projects that propose to—

(1) carry out a critical infrastructure project in
a historically disadvantaged community; or

(2) address a safety risk in the inspection, oper-
ation, maintenance, repair, modernization, or con-
struction of an element of critical infrastructure.

(e) LIMITATION.—Nothing in this section shall be con-
strued as to interfere with an agreement between a govern-
mental entity and a labor union.
(f) Report to Congress.—Not later than 1 year after the first grant is provided under this section, the Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report that evaluates the program carried out under this section, including—

(1) a description of the number of grants awarded;

(2) the amount of each grant;

(3) the activities funded under this section; and

(4) the effectiveness of such funded activities in meeting the objectives described in subsection (a).

(g) Funding.—

(1) Federal share.—

(A) In general.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the Federal share of the cost of a project carried out using a grant under this section shall not exceed 80 percent of the total project cost.

(B) Waiver.—The Secretary may increase the Federal share requirement under subparagraph (A) to up to 100 percent for a project carried out using a grant under this section by a governmental entity if such entity—
(i) submits a written application to the Secretary requesting an increase in the Federal share; and

(ii) demonstrates that the additional assistance is necessary to facilitate the acceptance and full use of a grant under this section, such as alleviating economic hardship, meeting additional workforce needs, or such other uses that the Secretary determines to be appropriate.

(2) Authorization of Appropriations.—

There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section—

(A) $50,000,000 for fiscal year 2023; and

(B) $50,000,000 for fiscal year 2024.

SEC. 3. DRONE EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE TRAINING GRANT PROGRAM.

(a) Authority.—The Secretary of Transportation shall establish a drone education and training grant program to make grants to educational institutions for workforce training for eligible small unmanned aircraft system technology.

(b) Use of Grant Amounts.—Amounts from a grant under this section shall be used in furtherance of activities
authorized under sections 631 and 632 of the FAA Reau-

(c) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible to receive a grant
under this section, an educational institution shall submit
an application to the Secretary at such time, in such form,
and containing such information as the Secretary may re-
quire.

(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are
authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section—

(1) $50,000,000 for fiscal year 2023; and

(2) $50,000,000 for fiscal year 2024.

SEC. 4. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE.—The term
"critical infrastructure" has the meaning given such
term in section 1016(e) of the Critical Infrastructures
Protection Act of 2001 (42 U.S.C. 5195c(e)).

(2) CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT.—The
term “critical infrastructure project” means a project
for the inspection, operation, maintenance, repair,
modernization, or construction of an element of crit-
ical infrastructure, including mitigating environ-
mental hazards to such infrastructure.

(3) COVERED FOREIGN ENTITY.—The term “cov-
ered foreign entity” means an entity—
(A) included on the Consolidated Screening List or Entity List as designated by the Secretary of Commerce;

(B) domiciled in the People’s Republic of China or the Russian Federation;

(C) subject to influence or control by the government of the People’s Republic of China or by the Russian Federation; or

(D) is a subsidiary or affiliate of an entity described in subparagraphs (A) through (C).


(5) Element of Critical Infrastructure.—The term “element of critical infrastructure” means a critical infrastructure facility or asset, including public bridges, tunnels, roads, highways, dams, electric grid, water infrastructure, communication systems, pipelines, or other related facilities or assets, as defined by the Secretary.
(6) ELIGIBLE SMALL UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEM.—The term “eligible small unmanned aircraft system” means a small unmanned aircraft system manufactured or assembled by a company that is domiciled in the United States and is not a covered foreign entity.

(7) GOVERNMENTAL ENTITY.—The term “governmental entity” means—

(A) a State, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, a territory of the United States, or a political subdivision thereof;

(B) a unit of local government;

(C) a Tribal Government;

(D) a metropolitan planning organization;

or

(E) a combination of the entities described in subparagraphs (A) through (D).

(8) SMALL UNMANNED AIRCRAFT; UNMANNED AIRCRAFT; UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEM.—The terms “small unmanned aircraft”, “unmanned aircraft”, and “unmanned aircraft system” have the meanings given such terms in section 44801 of title 49, United States Code.