To establish an energy storage and microgrid grant and technical assistance program.

A BILL

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 “Expanding Access to Sustainable Energy Act of 2019”.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

(a) Definitions.—In this Act:
(1) **Eligible Entity.**—The term “eligible entity” means—

(A) a rural electric cooperative; or

(B) a nonprofit organization working with at least 6 or more rural electric cooperatives.

(2) **Energy Storage.**—The term “energy storage” means the use of a system, equipment, facility, or technology that—

(A) is capable of absorbing energy, storing that energy for a period of time, and dispatching the stored energy; and

(B)(i) uses a mechanical, electrochemical, or thermal process to store energy that—

(I) was generated at an earlier time for use at a later time; or

(II) was generated from a mechanical process, and would otherwise be wasted, for delivery at a later time; or

(ii) stores thermal energy for direct use for heating or cooling at a later time in a manner that avoids the need to use electricity at that later time, including the storage and use offered by a grid-enabled water heater.

(3) **Island.**—The term “island”, with respect to a distributed generator or energy storage equip-
ment, means that the generator or equipment con-
tinues to power a location in the absence of electric
power from a primary source.

(4) MICROGRID.—The term “microgrid” means
an interconnected system of loads and distributed
energy resources, including generators and energy
storage devices, within clearly defined electrical
boundaries that—

(A) acts as a single controllable entity with
respect to the grid; and

(B) can connect and disconnect from the
grid to operate in both grid-connected mode
and island mode.

(5) RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCE.—The term
“renewable energy source” has the meaning given
the term in section 609(a) of the Public Utility Reg-
ulatory Policies Act of 1978 (7 U.S.C. 918c(a)).

(6) RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE.—The term
“rural electric cooperative” means an electric coop-
erative (as defined in section 3 of the Federal Power
Act (16 U.S.C. 796)) that sells electric energy to
persons in rural areas.

(7) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
the Secretary of Energy.
SEC. 3. ENERGY STORAGE AND MICROGRID ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

(a) In General.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall establish a program under which the Secretary shall—

(1) provide grants to eligible entities under subsection (c);

(2) provide technical assistance to eligible entities under subsection (d); and

(3) disseminate information to eligible entities on—

(A) the activities described in subsections (c)(1) and (d); and

(B) potential and existing energy storage and microgrid projects.

(b) Cooperative Agreement.—The Secretary may enter into a cooperative agreement with an eligible entity to carry out subsection (a).

(c) Grants.—

(1) In General.—The Secretary shall award grants to eligible entities for identifying, evaluating, designing, and demonstrating energy storage and microgrid projects that utilize energy from renewable energy sources.

(2) Application.—To be eligible to receive a grant under paragraph (1), an eligible entity shall
submit to the Secretary an application at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may require.

(3) USE OF GRANT.—An eligible entity that receives a grant under paragraph (1)—

(A) shall use the grant—

(i) to conduct feasibility studies to assess the potential for implementation or improvement of energy storage or microgrid projects;

(ii) to analyze and implement strategies to overcome barriers to energy storage or microgrid project implementation, including financial, contracting, siting, and permitting barriers;

(iii) to conduct detailed engineering of energy storage or microgrid projects;

(iv) to perform a cost-benefit analysis with respect to an energy storage or microgrid project;

(v) to plan for both the short- and long-term inclusion of energy storage or microgrid projects into the future development plans of the eligible entity; or
(vi) to purchase and install necessary equipment, materials, and supplies for demonstration of emerging technologies; and

(B) may use the grant to obtain technical assistance from experts in carrying out the activities described in this Act.

(4) CONDITION.—As a condition of receiving a grant under paragraph (1), an eligible entity shall—

(A) implement a public awareness campaign about the project implemented under the grant in the community in which the eligible entity is located;

(B) submit to the Secretary, and make available to the public, a report that describes—

(i) any energy cost savings and environmental benefits achieved under the project; and

(ii) the results of the project, including quantitative assessments to the extent practicable, associated with each activity described in paragraph (3)(A); and

(C) create and disseminate useful or innovative tools and resources that will benefit other
rural electric cooperatives, which may include
cost calculators, guidebooks, handbooks, tem-
plates and training courses.

(5) **COST-SHARE.**—Activities under this sub-
section shall be subject to the cost-sharing require-
ments of section 988 of the Energy Policy Act of

(d) **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary shall carry
out subsection (a)(2) by providing eligible entities
with technical assistance relating to—

(A) identifying opportunities for energy
storage and microgrid projects;

(B) understanding the technical and eco-
nomic characteristics of energy storage or
microgrid projects;

(C) understanding financing alternatives;

(D) permitting and siting issues;

(E) obtaining case studies of similar and
successful energy storage or microgrid projects;

(F) reviewing and obtaining computer soft-
ware for assessment, design, and operation and
maintenance of energy storage or microgrid sys-
tems; and
(G) understanding and utilizing the reliability and resiliency benefits of energy storage and microgrid projects.

(2) **EXTERNAL CONTRACTS.**—In carrying out subsection (a)(2), the Secretary may enter into contracts with third-party experts, including engineering, finance, and insurance experts, to provide technical assistance to eligible entities relating to the activities described in subparagraphs (A) through (G) of paragraph (1), or other relevant activities, as determined by the Secretary.

**SEC. 4. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this Act $5,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2020 through 2025.

(b) **ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS.**—Not more than 5 percent of the amount appropriated under subsection (a) for each fiscal year shall be used for administrative expenses.