To direct the Director of the Bureau of Land Management to study the effects of drone incursions on wildfire suppression, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NOVEMBER 12, 2019

Mr. CURTIS (for himself and Mr. HUFFMAN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on Agriculture, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To direct the Director of the Bureau of Land Management to study the effects of drone incursions on wildfire suppression, 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 “Aerial Incursion Repercussion Safety Act of 2019” or the “AIR Safety Act of 2019”.
SEC. 2. STUDY ON EFFECTS OF DRONE INCURSIONS ON WILDFIRE SUPPRESSION.

(a) Study Required.—The Director of the Bureau of Land Management, in consultation with the Chief of the Forest Service, shall conduct a study on the effects of drone incursions on the suppression of wildfires with respect to lands managed by the Department of the Interior or the Department of Agriculture.

(b) Study Contents.—In conducting the study required under subsection (a), the Director shall—

(1) determine, for each of the five most recently completed calendar years, the number of occurrences in which a drone incursion interfered with wildfire suppression and the effect of each such occurrence on—

(A) the length of time required to achieve complete suppression;

(B) the effectiveness of aerial firefighting responses; and

(C) the amounts expended by the Federal Government; and

(2) evaluate the feasibility and effectiveness of various actions to prevent drone incursions, including—

(A) the use of reasonable force to disable, damage, or destroy a drone;
(B) the seizure of a drone, including seizure with a net device; and

(C) the dissemination of education materials relating to the effects of drone incursions on wildfire suppression.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than 18 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director shall submit to the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate a report on the findings of the study required under subsection (a) and any recommendations of the Director relating to such findings.

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) DRONE.—The term “drone” means an unmanned aircraft system owned by a private individual or entity.

(2) DRONE INCURSION.—The term “drone incursion” means the operation of a drone within any airspace for which the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration has issued a temporary flight restriction because of a wildfire.

(3) WILDFIRE SUPPRESSION.—The term “wildfire suppression” has the meaning given such term in section 46320(d) of title 49, United States Code.