

**AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
TO H.R. 5324
OFFERED BY M . _____**

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

1 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

2 This Act may be cited as the “NOAA Weather Radio
3 Modernization Act of 2021” or “NWR Modernization Act
4 of 2021”.

5 SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

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

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

14 SEC. 3. FINDINGS.

15 Congress finds the following:

16 (1) The NOAA Weather Radio is a nationwide
17 network of transmitters that are critical to pro-

1 tecting life and property by broadcasting weather
2 and other hazard alerts.

3 (2) NOAA Weather Radio broadcasts currently
4 reach 95 percent of the United States population.

5 (3) NOAA Weather Radio broadcasts originate
6 from all National Weather Service Offices, but are
7 only available via a receiver located in sufficient
8 proximity to a radio transmitting tower.

9 (4) There are limited options to obtain NOAA
10 Weather Radio broadcasts via the Internet or mobile
11 device application, which are provided by volunteer
12 mechanisms obtaining the audio feed in an ad hoc
13 manner.

14 (5) NOAA Weather Radio should provide equal
15 access and availability to unimpeded broadcasts of
16 weather and non-weather hazards to every person lo-
17 cated within the United States, its territories, and
18 tribal lands.

19 **SEC. 4. UPGRADING EXISTING SYSTEMS.**

20 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall, to the
21 maximum extent practicable, expand coverage of the
22 NOAA Weather Radio and ensure its reliability. In doing
23 so, the Administrator shall—

1 (1) maintain support for existing systems serv-
2 ing areas not covered by or having poor quality cel-
3 lular service;

4 (2) ensure consistent maintenance and oper-
5 ations monitoring, with timely repairs to broadcast
6 transmitter site equipment and antennas; and

7 (3) enhance the ability to amplify Non-Weather
8 Emergency Messages via NOAA Weather Radio as
9 necessary.

10 (b) **AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**—There is
11 authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
12 \$20,000,000 to remain available until expended.

13 (c) **EXPANDING ACCESS.**—As part of the activities in
14 this section, the Administrator shall acquire additional
15 transmitters as required to expand coverage to rural and
16 underserved communities, national parks, and recreation
17 areas.

18 **SEC. 5. MODERNIZATION INITIATIVE.**

19 (a) **IN GENERAL.**—In parallel to the activities under
20 section 4, the Administrator shall, to the maximum extent
21 practicable, enhance NOAA Weather Radio to ensure its
22 capabilities and coverage remain valuable to the public. In
23 carrying out these activities, the Administrator shall—

24 (1) upgrade the telecommunications infrastruc-
25 ture to accelerate the transition of broadcasts to

1 Internet Protocol-based communications over non-
2 copper media;

3 (2) accelerate software upgrades to the Ad-
4 vanced Weather Interactive Processing System, or
5 the relevant system successors, in order to imple-
6 ment partial county notifications and alerts;

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

10 (4) develop options, including, but not limited
11 to, satellite backup capability, for NOAA Weather
12 Radio continuity in the event of Weather Forecast
13 Office outages;

14 (5) research and develop alternative options, in-
15 cluding, but not limited to, microwave capabilities, to
16 transmit NOAA Weather Radio signals to transmit-
17 ters that are remote or do not have IP capability;
18 and

19 (6) transition critical applications to the Inte-
20 grated Dissemination Program, or the relevant pro-
21 gram successors.

22 (b) PRIORITY.—In carrying out the objectives de-
23 scribed in subsection (a), the Administrator shall prioritize
24 practices, capabilities, and technologies recommended by
25 the assessment in subsection (c), to maximize accessibility,

1 particularly in remote and underserved areas of the coun-
2 try.

3 (c) ASSESSMENT FOR MANAGEMENT AND DISTRIBUTION.—Not later than 12 months after the date of enact-
4 tion.—Not later than 12 months after the date of enact-
5 ment of this Act, the Administrator shall complete an as-
6 sessment of access to NOAA Weather Radio. In con-
7 ducting such an assessment, the Administrator shall take
8 into consideration and provide recommendations on—

9 (1) the need for continuous, adequate, and
10 operational real-time broadcasts of the NOAA
11 Weather Radio in both urban and rural areas;

12 (2) solicited inputs from relevant stakeholders
13 on the compatibility of NOAA Weather Radio data
14 for third party platforms that provide online serv-
15 ices, such as websites and mobile device applications,
16 or deliver NOAA Weather Radio access;

17 (3) existing or new management systems, which
18 promote consistent, efficient, and compatible access
19 to NOAA Weather Radio;

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

22 (5) effective interagency coordination; and

23 (6) any other function the Administrator deems
24 necessary.

1 (d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
2 authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
3 \$40,000,000 to remain available until expended.

