

Union Calendar No. 40

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1482

[Report No. 118-60]

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.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 9, 2023

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

MAY 16, 2023

Additional sponsors: Mr. JACKSON of North Carolina and Ms. LEE of Pennsylvania

MAY 16, 2023

Reported from the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology; committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

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 2023” or the “NWR Modernization
6 Act of 2023”.

7 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

8 In this Act:

9 (1) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term “Adminis-
10 trator” means the Under Secretary of Commerce for
11 Oceans and Atmosphere and the Administrator of
12 the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administra-
13 tion.

14 (2) NOAA WEATHER RADIO.—The term
15 “NOAA Weather Radio” means the National Oce-
16 anic and Atmospheric Administration Weather Radio
17 All Hazards network.

18 **SEC. 3. FINDINGS.**

19 Congress finds the following:

20 (1) The NOAA Weather Radio is a nationwide
21 network of transmitters that are critical to pro-
22 tecting life and property by broadcasting weather
23 and other hazard alerts.

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

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

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

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

15 **SEC. 4. UPGRADING EXISTING SYSTEMS.**

16 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall, to the
17 maximum extent practicable, expand coverage of the
18 NOAA Weather Radio and ensure its reliability. In car-
19 rying out this subsection, the Administrator shall—

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

23 (2) ensure consistent maintenance and oper-
24 ations monitoring, with timely repairs to broadcast
25 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) EXPANDING ACCESS.—In carrying out subsection
5 (a), the Administrator shall acquire additional transmit-
6 ters as required to expand coverage to rural and under-
7 served communities, national parks, and recreation areas.

8 **SEC. 5. MODERNIZATION INITIATIVE.**

9 (a) IN GENERAL.—In parallel to the activities under
10 section 4, the Administrator shall, to the maximum extent
11 practicable, enhance NOAA Weather Radio to ensure its
12 capabilities and coverage remain valuable to the public. In
13 carrying out this section, the Administrator shall—

14 (1) upgrade telecommunications infrastructure
15 to accelerate the transition of broadcasts to internet
16 protocol-based communications over noncopper
17 media;

18 (2) accelerate software upgrades to the Ad-
19 vanced Weather Interactive Processing System, or
20 the relevant system successors, to implement partial
21 county notifications and alerts;

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

1 (4) develop options, including satellite backup
2 capability and commercial provider partnerships, for
3 NOAA Weather Radio continuity in the event of
4 Weather Forecast Office outages;

5 (5) research and develop alternative options, in-
6 cluding microwave capabilities, to transmit NOAA
7 Weather Radio signals to transmitters that are re-
8 mote or do not have internet protocol capability; and

9 (6) transition critical applications to the Inte-
10 grated Dissemination Program, or the relevant pro-
11 gram successors.

12 (b) PRIORITY.—In carrying out subsection (a), the
13 Administrator shall prioritize practices, capabilities, and
14 technologies recommended in accordance with the assess-
15 ment under subsection (c) to maximize accessibility, par-
16 ticularly in remote and underserved areas of the country.

17 (c) ASSESSMENT FOR MANAGEMENT AND DISTRIBUTION.—Not later than 12 months after the date of the
18 enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall complete
19 an assessment of access to NOAA Weather Radio. In con-
20 ducting such assessment, the Administrator shall take into
21 consideration and provide recommendations on the fol-
22 lowing:
23

1 (1) The need for continuous, adequate, and
2 operational real-time broadcasts of the NOAA
3 Weather Radio in both urban and rural areas.

4 (2) Solicited inputs from relevant stakeholders
5 on the compatibility of NOAA Weather Radio data
6 for third party platforms that provide online serv-
7 ices, such as websites and mobile device applications,
8 or deliver NOAA Weather Radio access.

9 (3) Existing or new management systems that
10 promote consistent, efficient, and compatible access
11 to NOAA Weather Radio.

12 (4) The ability of NOAA to aggregate real time
13 broadcast feeds at one or more central locations.

14 (5) Effective interagency coordination.

15 (6) The potential effects of an electromagnetic
16 pulse or geomagnetic disturbance on NOAA Weather
17 Radio.

18 (7) Any other function the Administrator deter-
19 mines necessary.

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