

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1629

To require the Secretary of Transportation to carry out a pilot program to develop and provide to States and transportation planning organizations accessibility data sets, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 13, 2021

Ms. BALDWIN (for herself and Ms. ERNST) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

A BILL

To require the Secretary of Transportation to carry out a pilot program to develop and provide to States and transportation planning organizations accessibility data sets, 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 “Connecting Opportuni-
5 ties through Mobility Metrics and Unlocking Transpor-
6 tation Efficiencies Act” or the “COMMUTE Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. ACCESSIBILITY DATA PILOT PROGRAM.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the
3 date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Transpor-
4 tation (referred to in this section as the “Secretary”) shall
5 establish an accessibility data pilot program (referred to
6 in this section as the “pilot program”).

7 (b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the pilot program is
8 to develop or procure an accessibility data set and make
9 that data set available to each eligible entity selected to
10 participate in the pilot program to improve the transpor-
11 tation planning of those eligible entities by—

12 (1) measuring the level of access by multiple
13 transportation modes to important destinations,
14 which may include—

15 (A) jobs, including areas with a concentra-
16 tion of available jobs;

17 (B) health care facilities;

18 (C) child care services;

19 (D) educational and workforce training fa-
20 cilities;

21 (E) affordable housing;

22 (F) food sources; and

23 (G) connections between modes, including
24 connections to—

25 (i) high-quality transit or rail service;

26 (ii) safe bicycling corridors; and

1 (iii) safe sidewalks that achieve com-
 2 pliance with applicable requirements of the
 3 Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
 4 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.);

5 (2) disaggregating the level of access by mul-
 6 tiple transportation modes by a variety of population
 7 categories, which may include—

8 (A) low-income populations;

9 (B) minority populations;

10 (C) age;

11 (D) disability; and

12 (E) geographical location;

13 (3) assessing the change in accessibility that
 14 would result from new transportation investments;
 15 and

16 (4) providing data necessary to prioritize trans-
 17 portation investments that will improve access by all
 18 modes of travel.

19 (c) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—An entity eligible to par-
 20 ticipate in the pilot program is—

21 (1) a State (as defined in section 101(a) of title
 22 23, United States Code);

23 (2) a metropolitan planning organization; or

24 (3) a rural transportation planning organiza-
 25 tion.

1 (d) APPLICATION.—To be eligible to participate in
2 the pilot program, an eligible entity shall submit to the
3 Secretary an application at such time, in such manner,
4 and containing such information as the Secretary may re-
5 quire, including information relating to—

6 (1) previous experience of the eligible entity
7 measuring transportation access, especially in low-in-
8 come, transit-dependent, or other high-needs com-
9 munities, or other performance management experi-
10 ence;

11 (2) the types of important destinations to which
12 the eligible entity intends to measure access;

13 (3) the types of data disaggregation the eligible
14 entity intends to pursue;

15 (4) a general description of the methodology the
16 eligible entity intends to apply;

17 (5) if the applicant does not intend the pilot
18 program to apply to the full area under the jurisdic-
19 tion of the applicant, a description of the geographic
20 area in which the applicant intends the pilot pro-
21 gram to apply; and

22 (6) a description of how the eligible entity plans
23 to use the data to improve access to jobs and serv-
24 ices by all modes of travel, including for commu-

1 nities of color, low-income communities, people who
2 are transit-dependent, and vulnerable road users.

3 (e) SELECTION.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall seek to
5 achieve diversity of participants in the pilot program
6 by selecting a range of eligible entities that shall in-
7 clude—

8 (A) States;

9 (B) metropolitan planning organizations
10 that serve an area with a population of 200,000
11 people or fewer;

12 (C) metropolitan planning organizations
13 that serve an area with a population of over
14 200,000 people; and

15 (D) rural transportation planning organi-
16 zations.

17 (2) INCLUSIONS.—The Secretary shall seek to
18 ensure that, among the eligible entities selected
19 under paragraph (1), there is—

20 (A) a range of capacity and previous expe-
21 rience with measuring transportation access;
22 and

23 (B) a variety of proposed methodologies
24 and focus areas for measuring level of access.

1 (f) DUTIES.—For each eligible entity participating in
2 the pilot program, the Secretary shall—

3 (1) develop or acquire an accessibility data set
4 described in subsection (b); and

5 (2) submit the data set to the eligible entity.

6 (g) METHODOLOGY.—In calculating the measures for
7 the data set under the pilot program, the Secretary shall
8 ensure that methodology is open source.

9 (h) AVAILABILITY.—The Secretary shall make an ac-
10 cessibility data set under the pilot program available to—

11 (1) units of local government within the juris-
12 diction of the eligible entity participating in the pilot
13 program; and

14 (2) researchers.

15 (i) REPORT.—Not later than 120 days after the last
16 date on which the Secretary submits data sets to the eligi-
17 ble entity under subsection (f), the Secretary shall submit
18 to Congress a report on the results of the program, includ-
19 ing—

20 (1) the feasibility of developing and providing
21 periodic accessibility data sets for all States, regions,
22 and localities; and

23 (2) an identification of specific actions the Sec-
24 retary and eligible entities participating in the pilot

1 program may take to further the use of accessibility
2 data.

3 (j) FUNDING.—The Secretary shall carry out the
4 pilot program using amounts made available to the Sec-
5 retary for administrative expenses to carry out programs
6 under the authority of the Secretary.

7 (k) SUNSET.—The pilot program shall terminate on
8 the date that is 5 years after the date on which the pilot
9 program is implemented.

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