

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 979

To amend the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 to authorize additional funds for the Emergency Broadband Connectivity Fund, to provide grants to States and Tribal entities to strengthen the National Lifeline Eligibility Verifier, to provide for Federal coordination between the National Lifeline Eligibility Verifier and the National Accuracy Clearinghouse, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 25, 2021

Mr. WYDEN (for himself, Ms. KLOBUCHAR, Mr. MARKEY, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. WARNOCK, Mr. BOOKER, Mrs. GILLIBRAND, Mr. MENENDEZ, Ms. BALDWIN, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Ms. DUCKWORTH, Mrs. FEINSTEIN, Mr. MERKLEY, Mr. SANDERS, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mrs. MURRAY) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

A BILL

To amend the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 to authorize additional funds for the Emergency Broadband Connectivity Fund, to provide grants to States and Tribal entities to strengthen the National Lifeline Eligibility Verifier, to provide for Federal coordination between the National Lifeline Eligibility Verifier and the National Accuracy Clearinghouse, 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,*

1 **SECTION 1. AUTHORIZATION FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR**
2 **THE EMERGENCY BROADBAND**
3 **CONNECTIVITY FUND.**

4 There are authorized to be appropriated to the Emer-
5 gency Broadband Connectivity Fund established under
6 subsection (i) of section 904 of title IX of division N of
7 the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (Public Law
8 116–260) \$6,000,000,000 for fiscal year 2022 for the pur-
9 poses described in paragraph (3) of such subsection, and
10 such amount is authorized to remain available until fiscal
11 year 2026.

12 **SEC. 2. GRANTS TO STATES TO STRENGTHEN NATIONAL**
13 **LIFELINE ELIGIBILITY VERIFIER.**

14 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 45 days after the
15 date of the enactment of this Act, the Commission shall
16 establish a program to provide a grant, from amounts ap-
17 propriated under subsection (d), to each eligible entity for
18 the purpose described under subsection (b).

19 (b) PURPOSE.—The Commission shall make a grant
20 to each eligible entity for the purpose of establishing or
21 amending a connection between the databases of such en-
22 tity that contain information concerning the receipt by a
23 household, or a member of a household, of benefits under
24 a program administered by such entity (including any ben-
25 efit provided under the supplemental nutrition assistance
26 program under the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7

1 U.S.C. 2011 et seq.)) and the National Lifeline Eligibility
2 Verifier so that the receipt by a household, or a member
3 of a household, of benefits under such benefits program—

4 (1) is reflected in the National Lifeline Eligi-
5 bility Verifier; and

6 (2) can be used to verify eligibility for—

7 (A) the Lifeline program established under
8 subpart E, part 54, of title 47, Code of Federal
9 Regulations (or any successor regulation); and

10 (B) the Emergency Broadband Benefit
11 Program established under section 904(b) of
12 title IX of division N of the Consolidated Ap-
13 propriations Act, 2021 (Public Law 116–260).

14 (c) DISBURSEMENT OF GRANT FUNDS.—Not later
15 than 60 days after the program established under sub-
16 section (a) is established, funds provided under each grant
17 made under such subsection shall be disbursed to the enti-
18 ty receiving such grant.

19 (d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATION.—There are
20 authorized to be appropriated \$200,000,000 for fiscal year
21 2022 for the purposes of carrying out this section, and
22 such amount is authorized to remain available until fiscal
23 year 2026.

24 (e) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—In this section, the term
25 “eligible entity” means an entity that—

1 (1) is a State or Tribal entity; and

2 (2) not later than 30 days after the date of the
3 enactment of this Act, submits to the Commission
4 an application containing such information as the
5 Commission may require.

6 **SEC. 3. FEDERAL COORDINATION BETWEEN NATIONAL ELI-**
7 **GIBILITY VERIFIER AND NATIONAL ACCU-**
8 **RACY CLEARINGHOUSE.**

9 Notwithstanding section 11(x)(2)(C)(i) of the Food
10 and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2020(x)(2)(C)(i)),
11 not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment
12 of this Act, the Commission shall, in coordination with the
13 Secretary of Agriculture, establish an automated connec-
14 tion, to the maximum extent practicable, between the Na-
15 tional Lifeline Eligibility Verifier and the National Accu-
16 racy Clearinghouse established under section 11(x) of the
17 Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2020(x)) for
18 the supplemental nutrition assistance program.

19 **SEC. 4. DEFINITIONS.**

20 In this Act:

21 (1) **AUTOMATED CONNECTION.**—The term
22 “automated connection” means a connection be-
23 tween two or more information systems where the
24 manual input of information in one system leads to

1 the automatic input of the same information into
2 any other connected system.

3 (2) COMMISSION.—The term “Commission”
4 means the Federal Communications Commission.

5 (3) NATIONAL LIFELINE ELIGIBILITY
6 VERIFIER.—The term “National Lifeline Eligibility
7 Verifier” has the meaning given such term in section
8 54.400 of title 47, Code of Federal Regulations (or
9 any successor regulation).

10 (4) STATE.—The term “State” has the mean-
11 ing given such term in section 3 of the Communica-
12 tions Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 153).

13 (5) TRIBAL ENTITY.—The term “Tribal entity”
14 means any of the following:

15 (A) The governing body of any Indian or
16 Alaska Native Tribe, band, nation, pueblo, vil-
17 lage, community, component band, or compo-
18 nent reservation, individually recognized (in-
19 cluding parenthetically) in the list published
20 most recently as of the date of enactment of
21 this Act pursuant to section 104 of the Feder-
22 ally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act of 1994
23 (25 U.S.C. 5131).

1 (B) The Department of Hawaiian Home
2 Lands.

