

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 2875

To require the prompt reconstruction of and restoration of suspended operation of rural post offices, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 21, 2023

Mr. HAWLEY introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

A BILL

To require the prompt reconstruction of and restoration of suspended operation of rural post offices, 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 “Rural Post Office Re-
5 construction Act of 2023”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) Rural communities rely heavily on post of-
9 fices for daily life.

1 (2) Many rural towns lack access to digital
2 communications and high-speed broadband.

3 (3) The loss of a functioning post office in a
4 rural community jeopardizes vital services, including
5 reliable medical deliveries, payment disbursements,
6 and essential communications.

7 (4) Efficiently and promptly rebuilding rural
8 post offices is necessary to ensure individuals retain
9 vital services.

10 **SEC. 3. RECONSTRUCTION AND RESTORATION OF SUS-**
11 **PENDED POST OFFICES.**

12 (a) AMENDMENT.—Chapter 4 of title 39, United
13 States Code, is amended by adding at the end the fol-
14 lowing:

15 **“§ 417. Reconstruction and restoration of suspended**
16 **post offices**

17 “(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

18 “(1) the term ‘damaged rural post office’ means
19 a rural post office—

20 “(A) that becomes inoperable or suffers ir-
21 reparable damage on or after the date that is
22 2 years before the date of enactment of this
23 section; and

24 “(B) for which no alternate suitable quar-
25 ters exist in the community;

1 “(2) the term ‘rural post office’ means a post
2 office located in an area not included within an
3 urban area (as defined by the Bureau of the Cen-
4 sus); and

5 “(3) the term ‘suspended rural post office’
6 means a rural post office that suspends operation
7 due to a lease or rental agreement termination on or
8 after the date that is 2 years before the date of en-
9 actment of this section.

10 “(b) RECONSTRUCTION.—

11 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Postal Service shall
12 commence reconstruction of a damaged rural post
13 office, which shall be carried out in consultation with
14 the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Man-
15 agement Agency if the damage is due to a natural
16 disaster—

17 “(A) if the damaged rural post office be-
18 comes inoperable or suffers irreparable damage
19 on or after the date of enactment of this sec-
20 tion, not later than 90 days after the date of
21 such inoperability or irreparable damage; and

22 “(B) if the damaged rural post office be-
23 came inoperable or suffered irreparable damage
24 not more than 2 years before the date of enact-

1 ment of this section, not later than 90 days
2 after the date of such enactment.

3 “(2) EXCEPTION.—The Postal Service shall
4 delay reconstruction of a damaged rural post office
5 under paragraph (1) if individuals directly involved
6 with the reconstruction will be subject to physical in-
7 jury or undue risk due to the reconstruction efforts
8 until such time as it would be safe for those individ-
9 uals to proceed with the reconstruction.

10 “(c) RESTORATION OF SUSPENDED OPERATION.—
11 The Postal Service, in consultation with the Administrator
12 of General Services, shall secure a suitable replacement
13 lease or rental agreement for a suspended rural post of-
14 fice—

15 “(1) if the suspended rural post office suspends
16 operation on or after the date of enactment of this
17 section, not later than 90 days after the date of sus-
18 pension of operation; and

19 “(2) if the suspended rural post office sus-
20 pended operation not more than 2 years before the
21 date of enactment of this section, not later than 90
22 days after the date of such enactment.

23 “(d) REPORT REQUIRED.—If the Postal Service does
24 not execute the measures described in subsection (b) or
25 (c) within the time period required under the applicable

1 subsection, the Postmaster General shall submit to the
 2 Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Af-
 3 fairs of the Senate and the Committee on Oversight and
 4 Accountability of the House of Representatives a report
 5 that—

6 “(1) describes in detail the specific reasons why
 7 reconstruction of the damaged rural post office or
 8 restoration of operation of the suspended rural post
 9 office was not performed;

10 “(2) describes in detail any remediation efforts
 11 for individuals adversely affected by the suspension
 12 of mail operations; and

13 “(3) provides a specific timeline for completion
 14 of the reconstruction or restoration of operations, as
 15 applicable.”.

16 (b) **TECHNICAL AND CONFORMING AMENDMENT.**—
 17 The table of sections for chapter 4 of title 39, United
 18 States Code, is amended by inserting after the item relat-
 19 ing to section 416 the following:

“417. Reconstruction and restoration of suspended post offices.”.

20 **SEC. 4. FUNDING.**

21 No additional funds are authorized to be appro-
 22 priated to carry out the amendments made by this Act.

1 **SEC. 5. EFFECTIVE DATE.**

2 The amendments made by this Act shall take effect
3 on the date that is 90 days after the date of enactment
4 of this Act.

