

what they have done over the decades. It is only when we look back over the career of someone like Holly where we can see how much things have changed for the better. Without question, aviation is safer today than it has ever been, in no small part through the work of Holly Woodruff Lyons.

We thank Holly so much for her service to the committee, her service to the House of Representatives, and her service to the American people. Her work has saved lives and made this country a better, safer, and more prosperous place. We are sad to see her go, but we will not say goodbye. We still have her cellphone number. Instead, we will say, see you soon. We wish her and Mark all the best as they start this next chapter of their life.

Mr. PAPPAS. Madam Speaker, we thank Holly as well for her contributions to the House and to this important issue area and wish her all best in her next steps.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Madam Speaker, in closing, this legislation takes an important step in preparing the Federal Government and our communities for the introduction of advanced air mobility vehicles.

Madam Speaker, I urge support, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PAPPAS. Madam Speaker, I urge adoption of this commonsense legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. PAPPAS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 1339, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the yeas have it.

Mr. ROSENDALE. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3(s) of House Resolution 8, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion are postponed.

□ 1330

ELIMINATING BARRIERS TO RURAL INTERNET DEVELOPMENT GRANT ELIGIBILITY ACT

Mr. PAPPAS. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3193) to amend the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965 to provide for a high-speed broadband deployment initiative, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3193

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Eliminating Barriers to Rural Internet Development

Grant Eligibility Act” or the “E-BRIDGE Act”.

SEC. 2. HIGH-SPEED BROADBAND DEPLOYMENT INITIATIVE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Title II of the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3141 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“SEC. 219. HIGH-SPEED BROADBAND DEPLOYMENT INITIATIVE.

“(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

“(1) BROADBAND PROJECT.—The term ‘broadband project’ means, for the purpose of providing, extending, expanding, or improving high-speed broadband service to further the goals of this Act—

“(A) planning, technical assistance, or training;

“(B) the acquisition or development of land; or

“(C) the acquisition, design and engineering, construction, rehabilitation, alteration, expansion, or improvement of facilities, including related machinery, equipment, contractual rights, and intangible property.

“(2) ELIGIBLE RECIPIENT.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The term ‘eligible recipient’ means an eligible recipient.

“(B) INCLUSIONS.—The term ‘eligible recipient’ includes—

“(i) a public-private partnership; and

“(ii) a consortium formed for the purpose of providing, extending, expanding, or improving high-speed broadband service between 1 or more eligible recipients and 1 or more for-profit organizations.

“(3) HIGH-SPEED BROADBAND.—The term ‘high-speed broadband’ means the provision of 2-way data transmission with sufficient downstream and upstream speeds to end users to permit effective participation in the economy and to support economic growth, as determined by the Secretary.

“(b) BROADBAND PROJECTS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—On the application of an eligible recipient, the Secretary may make grants under this title for broadband projects, which shall be subject to the provisions of this section.

“(2) CONSIDERATIONS.—In reviewing applications submitted under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall take into consideration geographic diversity of grants allocated, including consideration of underserved markets, in addition to data requested in paragraph (3).

“(3) DATA REQUESTED.—In reviewing an application submitted under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall request from the Federal Communications Commission, the Administrator of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, the Secretary of Agriculture, and the Appalachian Regional Commission data on—

“(A) the level and extent of broadband service that exists in the area proposed to be served; and

“(B) the level and extent of broadband service that will be deployed in the area proposed to be served pursuant to another Federal program.

“(4) INTEREST IN REAL OR PERSONAL PROPERTY.—For any broadband project carried out by an eligible recipient that is a public-private partnership or consortium, the Secretary shall require that title to any real or personal property acquired or improved with grant funds, or if the recipient will not acquire title, another possessory interest acceptable to the Secretary, be vested in a public partner or eligible nonprofit organization or association for the useful life of the project, after which title may be transferred to any member of the public-private partnership or consortium in accordance with regulations promulgated by the Secretary.

“(5) PROCUREMENT.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person or entity

shall be disqualified from competing to provide goods or services related to a broadband project on the basis that the person or entity participated in the development of the broadband project or in the drafting of specifications, requirements, statements of work, or similar documents related to the goods or services to be provided.

“(6) BROADBAND PROJECT PROPERTY.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may permit a recipient of a grant for a broadband project to grant an option to acquire real or personal property (including contractual rights and intangible property) related to that project to a third party on such terms as the Secretary determines to be appropriate, subject to the condition that the option may only be exercised after the Secretary releases the Federal interest in the property.

“(B) TREATMENT.—The grant or exercise of an option described in subparagraph (A) shall not constitute a redistribution of grant funds under section 217.

“(c) NON-FEDERAL SHARE.—In determining the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of a broadband project, the Secretary may provide credit toward the non-Federal share for the present value of allowable contributions over the useful life of the broadband project, subject to the condition that the Secretary may require such assurances of the value of the rights and of the commitment of the rights as the Secretary determines to be appropriate.”.

(b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of contents in section 1(b) of the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3121 note; Public Law 89-136) is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 218 the following:

“Sec. 219. High-speed broadband deployment initiative.”.

SEC. 3. DETERMINATION OF BUDGETARY EFFECTS.

The budgetary effects of this Act, for the purpose of complying with the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act of 2010, shall be determined by reference to the latest statement titled “Budgetary Effects of PAYGO Legislation” for this Act, submitted for printing in the Congressional Record by the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, provided that such statement has been submitted prior to the vote on passage.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. PAPPAS) and the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. GRAVES) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Hampshire.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PAPPAS. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 3193, as amended.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Hampshire?

There was no objection.

Mr. PAPPAS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3193, the Eliminating Barriers to Rural Internet Development Grant Eligibility, or E-BRIDGE, Act.

Introduced by Ranking Member GRAVES and Representative GUEST, the bill would create a high-speed

broadband initiative at the Economic Development Administration and clarify that public-private partnerships and consortiums are eligible for broadband project grant awards.

Access to reliable high-speed internet is vital for participation in today's workforce and economy. Whether it is working or learning from home, communicating virtually with friends and family, shopping online, or consulting with your doctor remotely, almost every aspect of our daily lives now relies on a connection to the internet.

Unfortunately, millions of people across the country still don't have access to high-speed internet. In my home State of New Hampshire, 10 percent of households lack an internet subscription. This problem is especially prevalent in rural America.

According to a study by the Pew Research Center, almost 30 percent of rural Americans don't have access to high-speed broadband internet services at home. This poses challenges for our small businesses, for students, for families.

Passing this legislation will help our rural communities thrive by removing existing barriers to internet development.

EDA already has the authority to award grants to fund the deployment of broadband infrastructure in communities in most need of assistance, but many communities lack the financial and technical resources necessary to properly develop broadband deployment strategies.

In order to effectively deploy broadband projects in the last mile, local communities must have the flexibility to collaborate with public-private partnerships and consortiums in developing these proposals. By clarifying that public-private partnerships and consortiums are eligible for EDA grants, H.R. 3193 ensures that communities can leverage private-sector expertise without disqualifying them from receiving assistance.

This bill also provides grant applicants with additional flexibility in financing broadband infrastructure projects by clarifying that funds can be combined with other Federal resources and allowing real or personal property to count toward the non-Federal share of a project's cost.

Madam Speaker, I thank the ranking member for introducing this critical legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES,
Washington, DC, November 3, 2021.

Hon. PETER DEFAZIO,
Chairman, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I am writing concerning H.R. 3193, the "E-BRIDGE Act." In order to permit H.R. 3193 to proceed expeditiously to the House Floor, I agree to forgo formal consideration of the bill.

The Committee on Financial Services takes this action to forego formal consideration of H.R. 3193 in light of our mutual understanding that, by foregoing formal consideration of H.R. 3193 at this time, we do not waive any jurisdiction over the subject

matter contained in this or similar legislation, and that our Committee will be appropriately consulted and involved as this or similar legislation moves forward with regard to any matters in the Committee's jurisdiction. The Committee also reserves the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving this or similar legislation that involves the Committee's jurisdiction and request your support for any such request.

Finally, I would appreciate your response to this letter confirming this understanding, and I would ask that a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter be included in the Congressional Record during Floor consideration of H.R. 3193.

Sincerely,

MAXINE WATERS,
Chairwoman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE,
Washington, DC, November 3, 2021.

Hon. MAXINE WATERS,
Chairwoman, Committee on Financial Services,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRWOMAN WATERS: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 3193, the E-BRIDGE Act. I appreciate your willingness to work cooperatively on this legislation.

I acknowledge that by foregoing formal consideration on H.R. 3193, the Committee on Financial Services does not waive any future jurisdictional claims to provisions in this or similar legislation, and that your Committee will be consulted and involved on any matters in your Committee's jurisdiction should this legislation move forward. In addition, should a conference on the bill be necessary, I would support your effort to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees to any House-Senate conference involving provisions within this legislation on which the Committee on Financial Services has a valid jurisdictional claim.

I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation, and I will ensure that our exchange of letters is included in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of H.R. 3193.

Sincerely,

PETER DEFAZIO,
Chair.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I am proud to be the sponsor of H.R. 3193, the Eliminating Barriers to Rural Internet Development Grant Eligibility Act, or E-BRIDGE, along with the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. GUEST).

Unfortunately, too many of our communities, particularly in rural America, still lack broadband access. Broadband is critical to conducting business and attracting jobs for telehealth, education, and emergency preparedness and response efforts in this digital age.

While Economic Development Administration, or EDA, grants may already be used to attract jobs in economically distressed areas, there are hurdles to using these grants for broadband projects, including difficult last-mile efforts that often delay rural broadband development. This bill removes those hurdles to help connect and revitalize our rural communities.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PAPPAS. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. GUEST).

Mr. GUEST. Madam Speaker, I would first like to thank Ranking Member GRAVES for his leadership on this important piece of legislation that would eliminate hurdles and leverage Economic Development Administration dollars to invest in broadband deployment across America's rural communities.

By utilizing public-private partnerships and consortia between internet service providers and economic development agencies, EDA dollars could be leveraged to deploy broadband and spur modern economic development for rural and economically distressed communities.

Many of these consortia exist within the private sector, including many large corporations working to deploy broadband across vast rural areas. However, EDA funds have been held back from small towns and communities working to attract private investment in their communities. The E-BRIDGE Act would directly respond to the needs of these communities and provide flexibility to leverage in-kind services and other Federal resources.

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the necessity of the internet in our lives and the need to close the digital divide that exists between rural and urban areas. This bill is supported by The App Association, American Farm Bureau, and the National Association of Development Organizations.

I appreciate the chairman and ranking member for bringing this legislation to the floor, and I urge my colleagues to support it.

Mr. PAPPAS. Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

H.R. 3193 is going to ensure that rural and economically distressed communities are equipped to use EDA grants to develop high-speed broadband access. I feel very strongly about this bill, and I urge support of this important legislation.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PAPPAS. Madam Speaker, I thank Ranking Member GRAVES and Mr. GUEST for their leadership on this important issue. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. PAPPAS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3193, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. ROSENDALE. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to section 3(s) of House Resolution 8, the yeas and nays are ordered.

Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this motion are postponed.

PRELIMINARY DAMAGE ASSESSMENT IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2021

Mr. PAPPAS. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3709) to direct the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to submit to Congress a report on preliminary damage assessments and make necessary improvements to processes in the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3709

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Preliminary Damage Assessment Improvement Act of 2021”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) Preliminary damage assessments play a critical role in assessing and validating the impact and magnitude of a disaster.

(2) Through the preliminary damage assessment process, representatives from the Federal Emergency Management Agency validate information gathered by State and local officials that serves as the basis for disaster assistance requests.

(3) Various factors can impact the duration of a preliminary damage assessment and the corresponding submission of a major disaster request, however, the average time between when a disaster occurs, and the submission of a corresponding disaster request has been found to be approximately twenty days longer for flooding disasters.

(4) With communities across the country facing increased instances of catastrophic flooding and other extreme weather events, accurate and efficient preliminary damage assessments have become critically important to the relief process for impacted States and municipalities.

SEC. 3. REPORT TO CONGRESS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency shall submit to Congress a report describing the preliminary damage assessment process, as supported by the Federal Emergency Management Agency in the 5 years before the date of enactment of this Act.

(b) CONTENTS.—The report described in subsection (a) shall contain the following:

(1) The process of the Federal Emergency Management Agency for deploying personnel to support preliminary damage assessments.

(2) The number of Agency staff participating on disaster assessment teams.

(3) The training and experience of such staff described in paragraph (2).

(4) A calculation of the average amount of time disaster assessment teams described in paragraph (1) are deployed to a disaster area.

(5) The efforts of the Agency to maintain a consistent liaison between the Agency and

State, local, tribal, and territorial officials within a disaster area.

SEC. 4. PRELIMINARY DAMAGE ASSESSMENT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 6 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency shall convene an advisory panel consisting of emergency management personnel employed by State, local, territorial, or tribal authorities, and the representative organizations of such personnel to assist the Agency in improving critical components of the preliminary damage assessment process.

(b) MEMBERSHIP.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—This advisory panel shall consist of at least 2 representatives from national emergency management organizations and at least 1 representative from each of the 10 regions of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, selected from emergency management personnel employed by State, local, territorial, or tribal authorities within each region.

(2) INCLUSION ON PANEL.—To the furthest extent practicable, representation on the advisory panel shall include emergency management personnel from both rural and urban jurisdictions.

(c) CONSIDERATIONS.—The advisory panel convened under subsection (a) shall—

(1) consider—

(A) establishing a training regime to ensure preliminary damage assessments are conducted and reviewed under consistent guidelines;

(B) utilizing a common technological platform to integrate data collected by State and local governments with data collected by the Agency; and

(C) assessing instruction materials provided by the Agency for omissions of pertinent information or language that conflicts with other statutory requirements; and

(2) identify opportunities for streamlining the consideration of preliminary damage assessments by the Agency, including eliminating duplicative paperwork requirements and ensuring consistent communication and decision making among Agency staff.

(d) INTERIM REPORT.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall submit to Congress a report regarding the findings of the advisory panel, steps that will be undertaken by the Agency to implement the findings of the advisory panel, and additional legislation that may be necessary to implement the findings of the advisory panel.

(e) RULEMAKING AND FINAL REPORT.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall issue such regulations as are necessary to implement the recommendations of the advisory panel and submit to Congress a report discussing—

(1) the implementation of recommendations from the advisory panel;

(2) the identification of any additional challenges to the preliminary damage assessment process, including whether specific disasters result in longer preliminary damage assessments; and

(3) any additional legislative recommendations necessary to improve the preliminary damage assessment process.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. PAPPAS) and the gentleman from Mississippi (Mr. GUEST) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Hampshire.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. PAPPAS. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members

may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 3709.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Hampshire?

There was no objection.

Mr. PAPPAS. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3709, introduced and championed by Representatives KATKO and DELGADO, two colleagues of ours on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

The Preliminary Damage Assessment, or PDA, Improvement Act would direct the Federal Emergency Management Agency to produce a report examining the PDA process and establish a more consistent training regime for FEMA personnel to effectively support State and local officials as they conduct these assessments in the wake of disaster.

FEMA uses PDA findings to determine the extent of damage and the subsequent unmet needs of individuals, businesses, and the public sector in a disaster-impacted area.

This bill will ensure greater consistency of PDAs across FEMA's 10 regions by creating a training program with a goal of ensuring a more consistent process of data collection and analysis.

As communities across the country experience more extreme weather events, consistent and timely PDAs are more important than ever to the recovery process.

Madam Speaker, I support this legislation and ask my colleagues to do the same. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GUEST. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3709, the Preliminary Damage Assessment Improvement Act of 2021, introduced by the gentleman from New York (Mr. KATKO).

FEMA's preliminary disaster assessment is crucial when determining eligibility for disaster assistance. This bill will ensure State and local stakeholders are involved in reviewing and developing recommendations for improving this process. This bill will help reduce unnecessary delays and get assistance to disaster survivors more quickly so they can recover faster and move forward with their lives.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PAPPAS. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GUEST. Madam Speaker, I am prepared to close.

H.R. 3709 makes disaster recovery easier for victims by improving State and local communities' abilities to coordinate with FEMA when determining the impacts of major disasters.

Madam Speaker, I urge support of this important bipartisan legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.