

who worked diligently each and every day. I know there is a lot of work that goes on behind the scenes.

While we at times disagree, I think we work very well together in our interests collectively as to advance the work of this great institution and the support and service of the American people, and I thank the gentleman for that.

To all of my colleagues and those listening, I wish them the very happiest whatever their holiday tradition or faith tradition is. Merry Christmas, happy Hanukkah, and to everyone, I wish them a very, very healthy and happy New Year.

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

Mr. STEIL. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I echo my colleague's remarks. It is true, we don't always agree on every policy issue of the day, but it is an honor to work with him. As is shown by these five pieces of legislation, this is a real opportunity for us to work together to move this institution and this country ahead.

As noted by my colleague, this would not be possible without the hard-working staff of both the majority and minority side, navigating through thorny issues at times. I thank my colleague and all the members of the committee as well as the staff for their hard work over the course of this Congress to make sure that the important work of this institution, but more importantly of the American people, is getting done.

I encourage my colleagues to support this legislation before us, as we have done with the previous four.

As my colleague jokingly said he does not suspect he will be here in 250 years when this capsule is opened in 2276. May the RECORD reflect I know I won't be here in 250 years, but I do think those that are here and open this capsule will be able to reflect back at the time we have spent working on behalf of our country here.

Mr. Speaker, I support and urge its passage, and I yield back balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. STEIL) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 6394, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

FEDERAL BROADBAND DEPLOYMENT TRACKING ACT

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3343) to require the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information to submit to Congress a plan for the Assistant Sec-

retary to track the acceptance, processing, and disposal of certain Form 299s, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3343

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 "Federal Broadband Deployment Tracking Act".

SEC. 2. PLAN FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY TO TRACK THE ACCEPTANCE, PROCESSING, AND DISPOSAL OF CERTAIN FORM 299S.

(a) PLAN.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Assistant Secretary shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a plan containing a description of—

(1) the process by which the Assistant Secretary proposes to—

(A) track the acceptance, processing, and disposal of each Form 299 for communications use authorization;

(B) provide applicants additional transparency with respect to the status of the applicable Form 299 for communications use authorization; and

(C) most expeditiously implement the plan; and

(2) any potential barriers to implementing the plan that are identified by the Assistant Secretary.

(b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term "appropriate congressional committees" means—

(A) the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives; and

(B) the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate.

(2) ASSISTANT SECRETARY.—The term "Assistant Secretary" means the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information.

(3) COMMUNICATIONS FACILITY.—The term "communications facility" has the meaning given the term communications facility installation in section 6409(d) of the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 (47 U.S.C. 1455(d)).

(4) COMMUNICATIONS USE.—The term "communications use" means the placement and operation of a communications facility.

(5) COMMUNICATIONS USE AUTHORIZATION.—The term "communications use authorization" means an easement, right-of-way, lease, license, or other authorization—

(A) provided by the Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of Agriculture;

(B) to locate or modify a communications facility on covered land; and

(C) for the primary purpose of authorizing the occupancy and use of such covered land for communications use.

(6) COVERED LAND.—The term "covered land" means—

(A) public lands; and

(B) National Forest System land.

(7) FORM 299.—The term "Form 299" means the form established under section 6409(b)(2)(A) of the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 (47 U.S.C. 1455(b)(2)(A)), or any successor form.

(8) NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM.—The term "National Forest System" has the meaning given the term in section 11(a) of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 1609(a)).

(9) PUBLIC LANDS.—The term "public lands" means land under the management of—

(A) the Bureau of Land Management;

(B) the National Park Service;

(C) the United States Fish and Wildlife Service; or

(D) the Bureau of Reclamation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATTA) and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SOTO) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material in the RECORD on the bill.

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

There was no objection.

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 3343, the Federal Broadband Deployment Tracking Act. This bill requires the National Telecommunications and Information Administration to develop a plan for tracking the broadband permitting applications on Federal lands.

Broadband is essential to participate in everyday activities. Americans rely on their internet for their work, healthcare, education, and more. Congress has provided billions of dollars to close the digital divide. The NTIA is in the process of administering the \$42.45 billion BEAD program and must ensure that these dollars are spent wisely.

Too often, broadband deployment is delayed or prevented due to unnecessary red tape in the form of burdensome permitting requirements. Federal agencies are some of the biggest culprits behind the red tape, delaying the deployment of broadband to the communities that are in need.

The process of application approval for some of these permits has unfortunately become duplicative, ineffective, and time consuming. Worse, there is no transparency in the process.

Opaque Federal permitting review processes leave applicants in the dark on whether their application is complete, where it is in the review process, and when they can finally expect a decision.

The Federal Broadband Deployment Tracking Act addresses these concerns by providing clarity into the Federal permitting process, giving applicants transparency into the status of their reviews and improving the processing speed and disposition of applications.

Mr. Speaker, this is an important moment in time, and we must do all we can to ensure that every American can access reliable broadband.

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

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

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3343, the Federal Broadband Deployment Tracking Act.

Over the past 4 years, the Biden administration has worked hard to implement historic investments made by Congress in the bipartisan infrastructure law to expand broadband access to all Americans.

This includes the \$42 billion BEAD program, which will empower States and territories to close the digital divide and bring high-speed, affordable internet to unserved and underserved communities.

It should come as no surprise that many of the communities lacking internet access are rural, remote, and sparsely populated areas. Like in my own district, areas like Kenansville, Deer Park, Bull Creek, and Yeehaw Junction. Bringing this infrastructure to them will, in many cases, require crossing large geographic areas.

This is especially true in many of our Western States where significant amounts of territory are owned and managed by the Federal Government. H.R. 3343 is going to help bring more transparency to the status and progress of applications to deploy communications infrastructure on publicly owned and managed lands.

The bill requires the National Telecommunications and Information Administration to develop and implement a plan to assist communications providers in navigating the burdens of deploying communications infrastructure on public lands.

Ultimately, this bill should lead to more robust collaboration between those responsible for reviewing permit applications for Federal lands and communications providers who are trying to bring high-speed internet to all of our constituents.

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I thank Representative PFLUGER for his leadership on this bill that I was happy to co-introduce with him. This bipartisan legislation is the product of regular order, and I am pleased to see it taken up by the full House today.

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

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. PFLUGER), the bill's sponsor.

Mr. PFLUGER. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Ohio for yielding me time.

I rise in support of my legislation, the Federal Broadband Deployment Tracking Act. This bill is essential to improving transparency and efficiency in the broadband deployment process, which will help close the digital divide for rural Americans.

According to a 2024 GAO study on broadband deployment, the BLM and Forest Service, which handle most of the permitting reviews on Federal lands, often exceed the 270-day statutory deadline for processing applications. Lengthy application reviews, excessive fees, and complex environmental and historic preservation reviews mean delays in providing service

and higher prices leaving ordinary Americans without basic broadband services.

My legislation is simple. It requires the National Telecommunications and Information Administration to submit a comprehensive plan to Congress within 180 days detailing how the agency will track the acceptance, processing, and disposal of broadband permitting applications on Federal lands. These applications are essential for accessing easements and rights-of-way to build or maintain telecommunications infrastructure. The NTIA will also be responsible for detailing how quickly they will implement their plan and any potential barriers that they could face.

The Federal Broadband Deployment Tracking Act is a critical step toward a more connected America. By enhancing government accountability and accelerating broadband deployment, we are not just improving a process, we are investing in the future of our Nation. This act will help ensure that investments in broadband expansion reach Americans more quickly and effectively.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation. Together, we can close the digital divide and create a more connected future for all Americans.

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, I have no other speakers, if the gentleman is ready to close. I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, it is time to get this done for the American people. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, this bill is very essential because, again, as we have seen, broadband is absolutely essential for everyday Americans.

As we think about what happened during COVID, Americans were shut in, and they relied on broadband for everything from education to telehealth to business. It went across the board.

It is absolutely essential we get this bill passed today, and I urge passage of this legislation.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATTA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3343.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROMOTING UNITED STATES WIRELESS LEADERSHIP ACT OF 2023

Mr. LATTA. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 1377) to direct the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information to take certain actions to enhance the representation of the United States and promote

United States leadership in communications standards-setting bodies, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 1377

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 “Promoting United States Wireless Leadership Act of 2023”.

SEC. 2. REPRESENTATION AND LEADERSHIP OF UNITED STATES IN COMMUNICATIONS STANDARDS-SETTING BODIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—In order to enhance the representation of the United States and promote United States leadership in standards-setting bodies that set standards for 5G networks and for future generations of wireless communications networks, the Assistant Secretary shall, in consultation with the National Institute of Standards and Technology—

(1) equitably encourage participation by companies and a wide variety of relevant stakeholders, but not including any company or relevant stakeholder that the Assistant Secretary has determined to be not trusted, (to the extent such standards-setting bodies allow such stakeholders to participate) in such standards-setting bodies; and

(2) equitably offer technical expertise to companies and a wide variety of relevant stakeholders, but not including any company or relevant stakeholder that the Assistant Secretary has determined to be not trusted, (to the extent such standards-setting bodies allow such stakeholders to participate) to facilitate such participation.

(b) STANDARDS-SETTING BODIES.—The standards-setting bodies referred to in subsection (a) include—

(1) the International Organization for Standardization;

(2) the voluntary standards-setting bodies that develop protocols for wireless devices and other equipment, such as the 3GPP and the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers; and

(3) any standards-setting body accredited by the American National Standards Institute or Alliance for Telecommunications Industry Solutions.

(c) BRIEFING.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Assistant Secretary shall brief the Committees on Energy and Commerce and Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committees on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and Foreign Relations of the Senate on a strategy to carry out subsection (a).

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) 3GPP.—The term “3GPP” means the 3rd Generation Partnership Project.

(2) 5G NETWORK.—The term “5G network” means a fifth-generation mobile network as described by 3GPP Release 15 or higher.

(3) ASSISTANT SECRETARY.—The term “Assistant Secretary” means the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information.

(4) CLOUD COMPUTING.—The term “cloud computing” has the meaning given the term in Special Publication 800-145 of the National Institute of Standards and Technology, entitled “The NIST Definition of Cloud Computing”, published in September 2011, or any successor publication.

(5) COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK.—The term “communications network” means any of the following:

(A) A system enabling the transmission, between or among points specified by the user, of information of the user's choosing.