

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1737

To direct the Secretary of Commerce to submit to Congress a report containing an assessment of the value, cost, and feasibility of a trans-Atlantic submarine fiber optic cable connecting the contiguous United States, the United States Virgin Islands, Ghana, and Nigeria.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 27, 2025

Ms. PLASKETT (for herself and Mr. FULCHER) introduced the following bill;
which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Commerce to submit to Congress a report containing an assessment of the value, cost, and feasibility of a trans-Atlantic submarine fiber optic cable connecting the contiguous United States, the United States Virgin Islands, Ghana, and Nigeria.

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. ASSESSMENT OF TRANS-ATLANTIC SUBMARINE**
4 **FIBER OPTIC CABLE.**

5 (a) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date
6 of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary, in consultation
7 with the heads of other Federal departments and agencies

1 as necessary, shall submit to the Committee on Energy
2 and Commerce of the House of Representatives and the
3 Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of
4 the Senate a report containing an assessment of the value,
5 cost, and feasibility of a trans-Atlantic submarine fiber
6 optic cable connecting the contiguous United States, the
7 United States Virgin Islands, Ghana, and Nigeria, to en-
8 hance the national security of the United States.

9 (b) ELEMENTS.—The report required by subsection
10 (a) shall include an assessment of—

11 (1) the digital security, national security, and
12 economic opportunities associated with a trans-At-
13 lantic submarine fiber optic cable described in sub-
14 section (a);

15 (2) the lifespan of submarine fiber optic cables
16 currently connecting the United States Virgin Is-
17 lands to the contiguous United States;

18 (3) the current security of telecommunications
19 between the contiguous United States and the
20 United States Virgin Islands;

21 (4) the readiness of telecommunications infra-
22 structure in the United States Virgin Islands to sup-
23 port a trans-Atlantic submarine fiber optic cable de-
24 scribed in subsection (a);

1 (5) the potential for engagement with trusted
2 entities in the deployment of a trans-Atlantic sub-
3 marine fiber optic cable described in subsection (a),
4 and the associated geopolitical and economic advan-
5 tages;

6 (6) the potential connectivity opportunities to
7 maximize investments in the United States economy
8 through the use of a trans-Atlantic submarine fiber
9 optic cable described in subsection (a);

10 (7) the value, cost, and feasibility of estab-
11 lishing a data center and high-security cloud services
12 facility, with independent power generation, in the
13 United States Virgin Islands for communications of
14 the United States Africa Command, communications
15 of the United States Special Operations Command,
16 and national security communications;

17 (8) the state of submarine fiber optic cables
18 connected to United States telecommunications in-
19 frastructure; and

20 (9) any other related matters the Secretary de-
21 termines are appropriate.

22 (c) NO MANDATORY DATA COLLECTION.—The Sec-
23 retary may not require any entity to provide data for pur-
24 poses of preparing the report required by subsection (a).

1 (d) FORM.—The report required by subsection (a)
2 shall be submitted in unclassified form without any des-
3 ignation relating to dissemination control, but may include
4 a classified annex.

5 (e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

6 (1) NOT TRUSTED.—The term “not trusted”
7 means, with respect to an entity, that the entity is
8 determined by the Secretary to pose an unacceptable
9 risk to the national security of the United States, or
10 the security and safety of United States persons,
11 based solely on one or more determination described
12 under paragraphs (1) through (4) of section 2(c) of
13 the Secure and Trusted Communications Networks
14 Act of 2019 (47 U.S.C. 1601(c)).

15 (2) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
16 the Secretary of Commerce, acting through the As-
17 sistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications
18 and Information.

19 (3) TRUSTED.—The term “trusted” means,
20 with respect to an entity, that the Secretary has not
21 determined that the entity is not trusted.

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