

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3593

To direct the Secretary of Transportation to establish a drone infrastructure inspection grant program and a drone education and workforce training grant program, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 22, 2023

Mr. STANTON (for himself and Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Transportation to establish a drone infrastructure inspection grant program and a drone education and workforce training grant program, 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 “Drone Infrastructure
5 Inspection Grant Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

7 In this Act:

1 (1) CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE.—The term
2 “critical infrastructure” has the meaning given such
3 term in subsection (e) of the Critical Infrastructures
4 Protection Act of 2001 (42 U.S.C. 5195c(e)).

5 (2) COVERED FOREIGN ENTITY.—The term
6 “covered foreign entity” means an entity—

7 (A) included on the Consolidated Screening
8 List or Entity List as designated by the Sec-
9 retary of Commerce;

10 (B) domiciled in the People’s Republic of
11 China or the Russian Federation;

12 (C) subject to influence or control by the
13 Government of the People’s Republic of China
14 or by the Russian Federation; or

15 (D) is a subsidiary or affiliate of an entity
16 described in subparagraphs (A) through (C).

17 (3) EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION.—The term
18 “educational institution” means an institution of
19 higher education (as defined in section 101 of the
20 High Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001)) that
21 participates in a program authorized under sections
22 631 and 632 of the FAA Reauthorization Act of
23 2018 (49 U.S.C. 40101 note).

24 (4) ELEMENT OF CRITICAL INFRASTRUC-
25 TURE.—The term “element of critical infrastruc-

1 ture” means a critical infrastructure facility or
2 asset, including public bridges, tunnels, roads, high-
3 ways, dams, electric grid, water infrastructure, com-
4 munication systems, pipelines, or other related facili-
5 ties or assets, as determined by the Secretary.

6 (5) ELIGIBLE SMALL UNMANNED AIRCRAFT
7 SYSTEM.—The term “eligible small unmanned air-
8 craft system” means a small unmanned aircraft sys-
9 tem manufactured or assembled by a company that
10 is domiciled in the United States and is not a cov-
11 ered foreign entity.

12 (6) ELIGIBLE SMALL UNMANNED AIRCRAFT
13 SYSTEM TECHNOLOGY.—The term “eligible small
14 unmanned aircraft system technology” means—

15 (A) an eligible small unmanned aircraft
16 system; or

17 (B) a major component of such a system
18 that is not manufactured by or procured from
19 a covered foreign entity.

20 (7) GOVERNMENTAL ENTITY.—The term “gov-
21 ernmental entity” means—

22 (A) a State, the District of Columbia, the
23 Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, a territory of
24 the United States, or a political subdivision
25 thereof;

1 (B) a unit of local government;

2 (C) a Tribal government;

3 (D) a metropolitan planning organization;

4 or

5 (E) a consortia of more than 1 of the enti-

6 ties described in subparagraphs (A) through

7 (D).

8 (8) PROJECT.—The term “project” means a
9 project for the inspection, operation, maintenance,
10 repair, modernization, or construction of an element
11 of critical infrastructure, including mitigating envi-
12 ronmental hazards to such infrastructure.

13 (9) SMALL UNMANNED AIRCRAFT; UNMANNED
14 AIRCRAFT SYSTEM.—The terms “small unmanned
15 aircraft” and “unmanned aircraft system” have the
16 meanings given such terms in section 44801 of title
17 49, United States Code.

18 **SEC. 3. DRONE INFRASTRUCTURE INSPECTION GRANT**

19 **PROGRAM.**

20 (a) AUTHORITY.—Not later than 180 days after the
21 date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Transpor-
22 tation shall establish a drone infrastructure inspection
23 grant program to make grants to governmental entities
24 to facilitate the use of eligible small unmanned aircraft
25 systems to support more efficient inspection, operation,

1 construction, maintenance, modernization, and repair of
2 critical infrastructure to improve worker safety related to
3 critical infrastructure projects.

4 (b) USE OF GRANT AMOUNTS.—A governmental enti-
5 ty may use a grant provided under this section to—

6 (1) purchase or lease eligible small unmanned
7 aircraft systems;

8 (2) support operational capabilities of eligible
9 small unmanned aircraft systems by the govern-
10 mental entity;

11 (3) contract for services performed using an eli-
12 gible small unmanned aircraft system in cir-
13 cumstances in which the governmental entity does
14 not have the resources or expertise to safely carry
15 out or assist in carrying out the activities described
16 under subsection (a); and

17 (4) support the program management capability
18 of the governmental entity to use an eligible small
19 unmanned aircraft system.

20 (c) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible to receive a grant
21 under this section, a governmental entity shall submit an
22 application to the Secretary at such time, in such form,
23 and containing such information as the Secretary may re-
24 quire, including an assurance that the governmental entity

1 or any contractor of the governmental entity, will comply
2 with relevant Federal regulations.

3 (d) SELECTION OF APPLICANTS.—In awarding a
4 grant under this section, the Secretary shall prioritize ap-
5 plications that propose to—

6 (1) carry out a critical infrastructure project in
7 a variety of communities, including urban, suburban,
8 rural, tribal, or any other type of community; and

9 (2) address a safety risk in the inspection, oper-
10 ation, construction, maintenance, or repair of critical
11 infrastructure.

12 (e) LIMITATION.—Nothing in this section shall be
13 construed as to interfere with an agreement between a
14 governmental entity and a labor union, including require-
15 ments under section 5333(b) of title 49, United States
16 Code.

17 (f) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 1 year
18 after the first grant is provided under this section, the
19 Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Transpor-
20 tation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives
21 and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transpor-
22 tation of the Senate a report that evaluates the program
23 carried out under this section, including—

24 (1) a description of the number of grants
25 awarded;

- 1 (2) the amount of each grant;
- 2 (3) the activities funded under this section; and
- 3 (4) the effectiveness of such funded activities in
- 4 meeting the objectives described in subsection (a).

5 (g) FUNDING.—

6 (1) FEDERAL SHARE.—

7 (A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in
8 subparagraph (B), the Federal share of the cost
9 of a project carried out using a grant under
10 this section shall not exceed 50 percent of the
11 total project cost.

12 (B) WAIVER.—The Secretary may increase
13 the Federal share requirement under subpara-
14 graph (A) to up to 75 percent for a project car-
15 ried out using a grant under this section by a
16 governmental entity if such entity—

17 (i) submits a written application to
18 the Secretary requesting an increase in the
19 Federal share; and

20 (ii) demonstrates that the additional
21 assistance is necessary to facilitate the ac-
22 ceptance and full use of a grant under this
23 section, such as alleviating economic hard-
24 ship, meeting additional workforce needs,

1 or such other uses that the Secretary de-
2 termines to be appropriate.

3 (2) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

4 There are authorized to be appropriated to carry out
5 this section—

6 (A) \$2,000,000 for fiscal year 2024;

7 (B) \$12,000,000 for fiscal year 2025;

8 (C) \$12,000,000 for fiscal year 2026;

9 (D) \$12,000,000 for fiscal year 2027; and

10 (E) \$12,000,000 for fiscal year 2028.

11 **SEC. 4. DRONE EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE TRAINING**

12 **GRANT PROGRAM.**

13 (a) AUTHORITY.—Not later than 180 days after the
14 date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Transpor-
15 tation shall establish a drone education and training grant
16 program to make grants to educational institutions for
17 workforce training for eligible small unmanned aircraft
18 system technology.

19 (b) USE OF GRANT AMOUNTS.—Amounts from a
20 grant under this section shall be used in furtherance of
21 activities authorized under sections 631 and 632 of the
22 FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018 (49 U.S.C. 40101
23 note).

24 (c) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible to receive a grant
25 under this section, an educational institution shall submit

1 an application to the Secretary at such time, in such form,
2 and containing such information as the Secretary may re-
3 quire.

4 (d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
5 are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this sec-
6 tion—

- 7 (1) \$2,000,000 for fiscal year 2024;
8 (2) \$12,000,000 for fiscal year 2025;
9 (3) \$12,000,000 for fiscal year 2026;
10 (4) \$12,000,000 for fiscal year 2027; and
11 (5) \$12,000,000 for fiscal year 2028.

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