

114TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 4160

To amend the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 to increase regional telecommunications development, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DECEMBER 2, 2015

Mr. HUFFMAN (for himself, Mr. THOMPSON of California, and Mr. NOLAN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture, and in addition to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To amend the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 to increase regional telecommunications development, 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 Broadband In-
5 frastructure Investment Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. RURAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS DEVELOPMENT.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—Title II of the Rural Electrifica-
3 tion Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 922 et seq.) is amended by
4 adding at the end the following new section:

5 **“SEC. 208. REGIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS DEVELOP-**
6 **MENT.**

7 “In addition to any preference given under section
8 201 with respect to a telephone loan made under this Act,
9 the Secretary may give preference to an application for
10 such a loan for a project that, as determined by the Sec-
11 retary, supports the development of telecommunications
12 services on a multijurisdictional basis. In evaluating such
13 an application, the Secretary shall consider whether—

14 “(1) the project that is the subject of the appli-
15 cation was developed through the collaboration and
16 participation of multiple stakeholders in the service
17 area of the project, including State, local, and tribal
18 governments, nonprofit institutions, institutions of
19 higher education, and private entities;

20 “(2) the applicant has an understanding of the
21 applicable regional resources that could support the
22 project, including natural resources, human re-
23 sources, infrastructure, and financial resources; and

24 “(3) the project has clear objectives and in-
25 cludes a means to establish measurable performance

1 measures and to track progress toward meeting such
2 objectives.”.

3 (b) EXEMPTION FROM STATE AGENCY REQUIRE-
4 MENT.—Section 201 of the Rural Electrification Act of
5 1936 (7 U.S.C. 922) is amended in the last sentence by
6 inserting “or the application involved is an application de-
7 scribed in section 208” before the period at the end.

8 (c) DEFINITION OF RURAL AREA.—Section 203(b) of
9 the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 924(b))
10 is amended by striking “5,000” and inserting “20,000”.

11 **SEC. 3. RURAL BROADBAND DEVELOPMENT.**

12 (a) AWARD OF GRANTS.—Section 601 of the Rural
13 Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 950bb) is amend-
14 ed—

15 (1) in subsection (a), by striking “loans and
16 loan guarantees” and inserting “loans, loan guaran-
17 tees, and grants”;

18 (2) in subsection (c)—

19 (A) in the subsection heading, by striking
20 “AND LOAN GUARANTEES” and inserting
21 “LOAN GUARANTEES, AND GRANTS”;

22 (B) in paragraph (1), by inserting “, and
23 may make grants,” after “loans”; and

24 (C) in paragraph (2)—

- 1 (i) in the matter preceding subpara-
2 graph (A), by striking “loans or loan guar-
3 antees” and inserting “loans, loan guaran-
4 tees, or grants”;
- 5 (ii) in subparagraph (A)—
- 6 (I) by striking “loan and loan
7 guarantee” and inserting “loan, loan
8 guarantee, and grant”; and
- 9 (II) by striking “loans and loan
10 guarantees” and inserting “loans,
11 loan guarantees, and grants”; and
- 12 (iii) in subparagraph (C), by striking
13 “loans or loan guarantees” and inserting
14 “loans, loan guarantees, or grants”;
- 15 (3) in subsection (d)—
- 16 (A) in paragraph (1)(A)—
- 17 (i) in the matter preceding clause (i),
18 by striking “loan or loan guarantee” and
19 inserting “loan, loan guarantee, or grant”;
- 20 (ii) in clause (ii), by striking “loan”
21 and inserting “loan or grant”; and
- 22 (iii) in clause (iii)—
- 23 (I) by striking “loan” and insert-
24 ing “loan or grant”; and

1 (II) by striking “loan made or
2 guaranteed” and inserting “loan or
3 grant made or loan guaranteed”;

4 (B) in paragraph (2)—

5 (i) in subparagraph (A), in the matter
6 preceding clause (i)—

7 (I) by inserting “or the funds re-
8 ceived through a grant made” after
9 “guaranteed”; and

10 (II) by striking “loan or loan
11 guarantee” and inserting “loan, loan
12 guarantee, or grant”; and

13 (ii) in subparagraph (B), by striking
14 “loan or loan guarantee” and inserting
15 “loan, loan guarantee, or grant”;

16 (C) in paragraph (3)(A), by striking “loan
17 or loan guarantee” and inserting “loan, loan
18 guarantee, or grant”;

19 (D) in paragraph (4), by striking “loan or
20 loan guarantee” and inserting “loan, loan guar-
21 antee, or grant”;

22 (E) in paragraph (5)(A), in the matter
23 preceding clause (i), by striking “loan or loan
24 guarantee” and inserting “loan, loan guarantee,
25 or grant”;

1 (F) in paragraph (6)—

2 (i) by striking “loan or loan guar-
3 antee” and inserting “loan, loan guar-
4 antee, or grant”; and

5 (ii) by striking “loan involved” and in-
6 serting “loan or grant involved”; and

7 (G) in paragraph (7), by striking “loan”
8 and inserting “loan or grant”;

9 (4) in subsection (f), by striking “loan or loan
10 guarantee” and inserting “loan, loan guarantee, or
11 grant”;

12 (5) in subsection (j)—

13 (A) in the matter preceding paragraph (1),
14 by striking “loan and loan guarantee” and in-
15 serting “loan, loan guarantee, and grant”;

16 (B) in paragraph (1)—

17 (i) by striking “loans” and inserting
18 “loans or grants”; and

19 (ii) by striking “loan” and inserting
20 “loan or grant”;

21 (C) in paragraph (2)—

22 (i) in subparagraph (A), by striking
23 “loan” and inserting “loan or grant”;

1 (ii) in subparagraph (B), by striking

2 “loans and loan guarantees” and inserting

3 “loans, loan guarantees, and grants”; and

4 (iii) in subparagraph (C), by striking

5 “loans and loan guarantees” and inserting

6 “loans, loan guarantees, and grants”; and

7 (D) in paragraph (3), by striking “loan”

8 and inserting “loan or grant”;

9 (6) by redesignating subsections (k) and (l) as

10 subsections (l) and (m), respectively;

11 (7) by inserting after subsection (j) the fol-

12 lowing new subsection:

13 “(k) MATCHING FUNDS REQUIREMENT.—The recipi-

14 ent of a grant under this section shall provide funds, in-

15 kind contributions, or a combination of both, from sources

16 other than funds provided through such grant in an

17 amount that is at least equal to 10 percent of the amount

18 of such grant.”;

19 (8) in subsection (l) (as so redesignated)—

20 (A) in paragraph (1), by striking “section”

21 and all that follows through “expended.” and

22 inserting the following: “section—

23 “(A) \$25,000,000 for each of fiscal years

24 2008 through 2015, to remain available until

25 expended; and

1 “(B) \$50,000,000 for each of fiscal years
2 2016 through 2020, to remain available until
3 expended.”; and

4 (B) in paragraph (2)(A), by striking
5 “loans and loan guarantees” and inserting
6 “loans, loan guarantees, and grants” each place
7 it appears in clauses (i) and (ii); and
8 (9) in subsection (m) (as so redesignated)—

9 (A) by striking “loan or loan guarantee”
10 and inserting “loan, loan guarantee, or grant”;
11 and

12 (B) by striking “2018” and inserting
13 “2020”.

14 (b) PRIORITY FOR SUPPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT OF
15 BROADBAND SERVICE.—Paragraph (2) of section 601(c)
16 of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C.
17 950bb(c)), as amended by subsection (a), is further
18 amended—

19 (1) in subparagraph (C), by striking “and” at
20 the end;

21 (2) in subparagraph (D), by striking the period
22 at the end and inserting “; and”; and

23 (3) by adding at the end the following new sub-
24 paragraph:

1 “(E) give priority to applicants that offer
2 in the applications of the applicants to provide
3 support for mutijurisdictional projects for the
4 development of broadband service in rural areas
5 that are developed through the collaboration
6 and participation of multiple stakeholders in the
7 service area of such a project, including State,
8 local, and tribal governments, nonprofit institu-
9 tions, institutions of higher education, and pri-
10 vate entities.”.

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