

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 5919

To require the Secretary of the Interior to conduct an assessment to identify locations in National Parks in which there is the greatest need for broadband internet access service and areas in National Parks in which there is the greatest need for cellular service, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 11, 2023

Mr. CURTIS introduced the following bill

OCTOBER 25, 2023

Referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

A BILL

To require the Secretary of the Interior to conduct an assessment to identify locations in National Parks in which there is the greatest need for broadband internet access service and areas in National Parks in which there is the greatest need for cellular service, 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 “Connect Our Parks
5 Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. BROADBAND INTERNET ACCESS SERVICE AND CEL-**
2 **LULAR SERVICE ASSESSMENT AND PLAN-**
3 **NING IN NATIONAL PARKS.**

4 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

5 (1) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CON-
6 GRESS.—The term “appropriate committees of Con-
7 gress” means—

8 (A) the Committee on Energy and Natural
9 Resources of the Senate;

10 (B) the Committee on Commerce, Science,
11 and Transportation of the Senate;

12 (C) the Committee on Natural Resources
13 of the House of Representatives; and

14 (D) the Committee on Energy and Com-
15 merce of the House of Representatives.

16 (2) BROADBAND INTERNET ACCESS SERVICE.—
17 The term “broadband internet access service” has
18 the meaning given the term in section 8.1(b) of title
19 47, Code of Federal Regulations (or a successor reg-
20 ulation).

21 (3) CELLULAR SERVICE.—The term “cellular
22 service” has the meaning given the term in section
23 22.99 of title 47, Code of Federal Regulations (or a
24 successor regulation).

25 (4) NATIONAL PARK.—The term “National
26 Park” means a unit of the National Park System.

1 (5) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
2 the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Di-
3 rector of the National Park Service.

4 (b) ASSESSMENT.—

5 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after
6 the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary
7 shall complete an assessment of National Parks to
8 identify—

9 (A) locations in National Parks in which
10 there is the greatest need for broadband inter-
11 net access service, based on the considerations
12 described in paragraph (2)(A); and

13 (B) areas in National Parks in which there
14 is the greatest need for cellular service, based
15 on the considerations described in paragraph
16 (2)(B).

17 (2) CONSIDERATIONS.—

18 (A) BROADBAND INTERNET ACCESS SERV-
19 ICE.—For purposes of identifying locations in
20 National Parks under paragraph (1)(A), the
21 Secretary shall consider, with respect to each
22 National Park, the availability of broadband
23 internet access service in—

24 (i) housing;

- 1 (ii) administrative facilities and re-
2 lated structures;
3 (iii) lodging;
4 (iv) developed campgrounds; and
5 (v) any other location within the Na-
6 tional Park in which broadband internet
7 access service is determined to be nec-
8 essary by the superintendent of the Na-
9 tional Park.

10 (B) CELLULAR SERVICE.—For purposes of
11 identifying areas in National Parks under para-
12 graph (1)(B), the Secretary shall consider, with
13 respect to each National Park, the availability
14 of cellular service in any developed area within
15 the National Park that would increase—

16 (i) the access of the public to emer-
17 gency services and traveler information
18 technologies; or

19 (ii) the communications capabilities of
20 National Park Service employees.

21 (3) REPORT.—On completion of the assessment
22 under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall submit to
23 the appropriate committees of Congress, and make
24 available on the website of the Department of the

1 Interior, a report describing the results of the as-
2 sessment.

3 (c) PLAN.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 3 years after
5 the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary
6 shall develop a plan, based on the results of the as-
7 sessment completed under subsection (b) and subject
8 to paragraph (4)—

9 (A) to install broadband internet access
10 service infrastructure in certain locations in Na-
11 tional Parks; and

12 (B) to install cellular service equipment
13 and infrastructure in certain areas of National
14 Parks.

15 (2) CONSULTATION.—In developing the plan
16 under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall consult
17 with—

18 (A) affected Indian Tribes; and

19 (B) local stakeholders that the super-
20 intendent of the applicable National Park deter-
21 mines to be appropriate.

22 (3) REQUIREMENTS.—The plan developed
23 under paragraph (1) shall—

24 (A) provide for avoiding or minimizing im-
25 pacts to—

- 1 (i) National Park viewsheds;
2 (ii) cultural and natural resources;
3 (iii) the visitor experience;
4 (iv) other resources or values of the
5 National Park; and
6 (v) historic properties and the
7 viewsheds of historic properties;
- 8 (B) provide for infrastructure providing
9 broadband internet access service or cellular
10 service to be located in—
- 11 (i) previously disturbed or developed
12 areas; or
13 (ii) areas zoned for uses that would
14 support the infrastructure;
- 15 (C) provide for the use of public-private
16 partnerships—
- 17 (i) to install broadband internet ac-
18 cess service or cellular service equipment;
19 and
20 (ii) to provide broadband internet ac-
21 cess service or cellular service;
- 22 (D) be technology neutral; and
23 (E) in the case of broadband internet ac-
24 cess service, provide for broadband internet ac-
25 cess service of at least—

1 (i) a 100–Mbps downstream trans-
2 mission capacity; and

3 (ii) a 20–Mbps upstream transmission
4 capacity.

5 (4) LIMITATION.—Notwithstanding paragraph
6 (1), a plan developed under that paragraph shall not
7 be required to address broadband internet access
8 service or cellular service in any National Park with
9 respect to which the superintendent of the National
10 Park determines that there is adequate access to
11 broadband internet access service or cellular service,
12 as applicable.

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