To require the National Institute of Standards and Technology to conduct research on public safety communication coordination standards among wildland firefighters and fire management response officials.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 17, 2023

Mrs. Kim of California (for herself, Ms. Stansbury, and Mr. Neguse) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

A BILL

To require the National Institute of Standards and Technology to conduct research on public safety communication coordination standards among wildland firefighters and fire management response officials.

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 “NIST Wildland Fire

5 Communications and Information Dissemination Act”.

6 SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

7 In this Act:
(1) **DIRECTOR.**—The term “Director” means the Director of the National Institute of Standards and Technology.

(2) **MEMBER AGENCY.**—The term “member agency” means a member agency of the National Interagency Fire Center, including the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Forest Service, United States Fire Administration, and the Department of Defense.

(3) **WILDLAND FIREFIGHTER.**—The term “wildland firefighter” means any person who participates in wildland firefighting activities.

(4) **FIRE MANAGEMENT RESPONSE OFFICIALS.**—The term “fire management response officials” means regional fire directors, deputy regional fire directors, agency officials who directly oversee fire operations, fire management officers, and individuals serving on incident management teams.

(5) **TECHNOLOGY MANUFACTURERS.**—The term “technology manufacturers” means companies that manufacture communications technologies used by Federal, State, Tribal, and local wildland fire authorities.
SEC. 3. RESEARCH.

(a) REQUIREMENT TO CONDUCT RESEARCH ON PUBLIC SAFETY.—Not later than 60 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Director, acting through the head of the Public Safety and Communications Research Division and in consultation with the Fire Research Division and technology manufacturers, shall carry out research on—

(1) public safety communication coordination standards among Federal, State, Tribal, and local wildland firefighters, fire management response officials, and member agencies; and

(2) improving and integrating existing communications systems to transmit secure real-time data, alerts, and advisories to fire management response officials and wildland firefighters.

(b) REQUIREMENT TO CONDUCT FIELD TESTING OF INFORMATION DISSEMINATION AND TECHNOLOGY.—The Public Safety and Communications Research Division, in consultation with the Fire Research Division and member agencies, will conduct both live and virtual field testing of equipment, software, and other technologies to determine current times of information dissemination and develop standards for the delivery of real-time data among member agencies, fire management response officials, and
wildland firefighters based on findings from research under subsection (a).

SEC. 4. RECOMMENDATIONS.

(a) Requirement To Develop and Provide Recommendations.—The Director shall develop and publish recommendations for member agencies to improve public safety communication coordination standards among wildland first responders and fire management response officials.

(b) Requirement To Provide Recommendations to the Office of Management and Budget, the Office of Science and Technology Policy, and Member Agencies.—The Director shall provide recommendations to the Office of Management and Budget and the Office of Science and Technology Police to assist member agencies with the implementation of the recommendations in subsection (a).

SEC. 5. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.

(a) Requirement To Report Research Findings and Recommendations.—The Director shall provide the recommendations published under section 4(a) to the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology and the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.
(b) Requirement To Report on the Implementation of Recommendations.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the publication of the Director’s recommendations, the Government Accountability Office shall produce a report on the extent to which member agencies have implemented the Director’s recommendations.

SEC. 6. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There are authorized to be appropriated to the National Institute of Standards and Technology $3,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2024 through 2028 to carry out this section.