

Directs NASA to use its ACERO project to improve aerial wildfire response through advanced aircraft, real-time data sharing, and coordinated multi-agency operations.

Summary:

Under this legislation, NASA will build on its existing ACERO initiative by advancing airspace management and coordination, developing interoperable platforms to track aerial assets, enhancing real-time information sharing, and establishing a multi-agency concept of operations for wildfires.

To ensure national security, the bill prohibits the procurement of drones from covered foreign entities (e.g., China), with limited case-by-case exemptions in the national interest. Annual progress reports to Congress will ensure oversight, transparency, and continued innovation.

Background:

- **Growing Wildfire Risk:** Longer, more intense wildfire seasons threaten lives, property, and ecosystems. Federal and state agencies face challenges coordinating aerial responses due to outdated systems and poor communication.
- **Utilizing NASA's Unique Capabilities:** NASA's ACERO project offers advanced technologies, like optimized airspace use and unmanned system integration, well-suited for improving wildfire response.
- **Protects U.S. Interests:** Prohibits drone purchases from foreign adversaries unless essential, ensuring taxpayer funds support national security.
- **Strengthens Collaboration:** Promotes coordination with agencies, academia, and industry to drive innovation and prevent duplication.
- **Ensures Accountability:** Requires annual reports through 2030 to track impact, address gaps, and safeguard responsible spending.