To provide guidance for and investment in the upgrade and modernization of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Weather Radio All Hazards network, and for other purposes.
A BILL

To provide guidance for and investment in the upgrade and modernization of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Weather Radio All Hazards network, and for other purposes.
Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-
tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “NOAA Weather Radio
Modernization Act of 2021” or “NWR Modernization Act
of 2021”.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

(a) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term “Administrator”
means the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and
Atmosphere and Administrator of the National Oceanic and
Atmospheric Administration.

(b) NOAA WEATHER RADIO.—The term “NOAA
Weather Radio” means the National Oceanic and Atmos-
pheric Administration Weather Radio All Hazards net-
work.

SEC. 3. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) The NOAA Weather Radio is a nationwide
network of transmitters that are critical to protecting
life and property by broadcasting weather and other
hazard alerts.

(2) NOAA Weather Radio broadcasts currently
reach 95 percent of the United States population.

(3) NOAA Weather Radio broadcasts originate
from all National Weather Service Offices, but are
only available via a receiver located in sufficient proximity to a radio transmitting tower.

(4) There are limited options to obtain NOAA Weather Radio broadcasts via the Internet or mobile device application, which are provided by volunteer mechanisms obtaining the audio feed in an ad hoc manner.

(5) NOAA Weather Radio should provide equal access and availability to unimpeded broadcasts of weather and non-weather hazards to every person located within the United States, its territories, and tribal lands.

SEC. 4. UPGRADING EXISTING SYSTEMS.

(a) In General.—The Administrator shall, to the maximum extent practicable, expand coverage of the NOAA Weather Radio and ensure its reliability. In doing so, the Administrator shall—

(1) maintain support for existing systems serving areas not covered by or having poor quality cellular service;

(2) ensure consistent maintenance and operations monitoring, with timely repairs to broadcast transmitter site equipment and antennas; and
(3) enhance the ability to amplify Non-Weather Emergency Messages via NOAA Weather Radio as necessary.

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section $20,000,000 to remain available until expended.

(c) EXPANDING ACCESS.—As part of the activities in this section, the Administrator shall acquire additional transmitters as required to expand coverage to rural and underserved communities, national parks, and recreation areas.

SEC. 5. MODERNIZATION INITIATIVE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—In parallel to the activities under section 4, the Administrator shall, to the maximum extent practicable, enhance NOAA Weather Radio to ensure its capabilities and coverage remain valuable to the public. In carrying out these activities, the Administrator shall—

(1) upgrade the telecommunications infrastructure to accelerate the transition of broadcasts to Internet Protocol-based communications over non-copper media;

(2) accelerate software upgrades to the Advanced Weather Interactive Processing System, or the relevant system successors, in order to implement partial county notifications and alerts;
(3) consult with relevant stakeholders, including the private sector, to enhance accessibility and usability of NOAA Weather Radio data and feeds;

(4) develop options, including, but not limited to, satellite backup capability and commercial provider partnerships for NOAA Weather Radio continuity in the event of Weather Forecast Office outages;

(5) research and develop alternative options, including, but not limited to, microwave capabilities, to transmit NOAA Weather Radio signals to transmitters that are remote or do not have IP capability; and

(6) transition critical applications to the Integrated Dissemination Program, or the relevant program successors.

(b) PRIORITY.—In carrying out the objectives described in subsection (a), the Administrator shall prioritize practices, capabilities, and technologies recommended by the assessment in subsection (c), to maximize accessibility, particularly in remote and underserved areas of the country.

(c) ASSESSMENT FOR MANAGEMENT AND DISTRIBUTION.—Not later than 12 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall complete an assessment of access to NOAA Weather Radio. In conducting
such an assessment, the Administrator shall take into consider-
ration and provide recommendations on—

(1) the need for continuous, adequate, and oper-
national real-time broadcasts of the NOAA Weather
Radio in both urban and rural areas;

(2) solicited inputs from relevant stakeholders on
the compatibility of NOAA Weather Radio data for
third party platforms that provide online services,
such as websites and mobile device applications, or
deliver NOAA Weather Radio access;

(3) existing or new management systems, which
promote consistent, efficient, and compatible access to
NOAA Weather Radio;

(4) the ability of NOAA to aggregate real time
broadcast feeds at one or more central locations;

(5) effective interagency coordination;

(6) the potential effects of an electromagnetic
pulse or geomagnetic disturbance on NOAA Weather
Radio; and

(7) any other function the Administrator deems
necessary.

(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section
$40,000,000 to remain available until expended.
A BILL

To provide guidance for and investment in the upgrade and modernization of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Weather Radio All Hazards network, and for other purposes.

MAY 6, 2022

Reported with an amendment, committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, and ordered to be printed.

[Report No. 117-308]