

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1427

To require the Secretary of Commerce to study the coverage gaps of the Next Generation Weather Radar of the National Weather Service and to develop a plan for improving radar coverage and hazardous weather detection and forecasting.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 8, 2017

Mr. PITTENGER introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

A BILL

To require the Secretary of Commerce to study the coverage gaps of the Next Generation Weather Radar of the National Weather Service and to develop a plan for improving radar coverage and hazardous weather detection and forecasting.

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. STUDY ON GAPS IN NEXRAD COVERAGE AND**
4 **REQUIREMENT FOR PLAN TO ADDRESS SUCH**
5 **GAPS.**

6 (a) STUDY ON GAPS IN NEXRAD COVERAGE.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after
2 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary
3 of Commerce shall complete a study on gaps in the
4 coverage of the Next Generation Weather Radar of
5 the National Weather Service (referred to in this
6 section as “NEXRAD”).

7 (2) ELEMENTS.—In conducting the study re-
8 quired under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall—

9 (A) identify areas in the United States
10 with limited or no NEXRAD coverage below
11 6,000 feet above ground level of the sur-
12 rounding terrain;

13 (B) for the areas identified under subpara-
14 graph (A)—

15 (i) identify the key weather effects for
16 which prediction would improve with im-
17 proved radar detection;

18 (ii) identify additional sources of ob-
19 servations for high impact weather that
20 were available and operational for such
21 areas on the day before the date of the en-
22 actment of this Act, including Terminal
23 Doppler Weather Radar (commonly known
24 as “TDWR”), air surveillance radars of

1 the Federal Aviation Administration, and
2 cooperative network observers; and

3 (iii) assess the feasibility and advis-
4 ability of efforts to integrate and upgrade
5 Federal radar capabilities that are not
6 owned or controlled by the National Oce-
7 anic and Atmospheric Administration, in-
8 cluding radar capabilities of the Federal
9 Aviation Administration and the Depart-
10 ment of Defense;

11 (C) assess the feasibility and advisability of
12 incorporating State-operated and other non-
13 Federal radars into the operations of the Na-
14 tional Weather Service;

15 (D) identify options to improve radar cov-
16 erage in the areas identified under subpara-
17 graph (A); and

18 (E) estimate the cost of, and develop a
19 timeline for, carrying out each of the options
20 identified under subparagraph (D).

21 (3) REPORT.—Upon the completion of the
22 study required under paragraph (1), the Secretary
23 shall submit a report to the Committee on Com-
24 merce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate,
25 the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate, the

1 Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the
2 House of Representatives, and the Committee on
3 Appropriations of the House of Representatives that
4 includes the findings of the Secretary with respect to
5 the study.

6 (b) PLAN TO IMPROVE RADAR COVERAGE.—Not
7 later than 30 days after the completion of the study under
8 subsection (a)(1), the Secretary of Commerce shall submit
9 a plan to the congressional committees referred to in sub-
10 section (a)(3) for improving radar coverage in the areas
11 identified under subsection (a)(2)(A) by integrating and
12 upgrading, to the extent practicable, additional observa-
13 tion solutions to improve hazardous weather detection and
14 forecasting.

15 (c) REQUIREMENT FOR THIRD-PARTY REVIEWS RE-
16 GARDING PLAN TO IMPROVE RADAR COVERAGE.—The
17 Secretary of Commerce shall seek third-party reviews on
18 scientific methodology relating to, and the feasibility and
19 advisability of, implementing the plan submitted under
20 subsection (b), including the extent to which warning and
21 forecast services of the National Weather Service would
22 be improved by additional NEXRAD coverage.

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