To utilize loans and loan guarantees under the rural broadband access program to provide broadband service for agricultural producers and to provide universal service support for installation charges for broadband service for agricultural producers in order to improve precision farming and ranching, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NOVEMBER 7, 2017

Ms. STEFANIK introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and in addition to the Committee on Agriculture, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To utilize loans and loan guarantees under the rural broadband access program to provide broadband service for agricultural producers and to provide universal service support for installation charges for broadband service for agricultural producers in order to improve precision farming and ranching, 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,
SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Precision Farming Act”.

SEC. 2. LOAN PRIORITIES IN PROVIDING ACCESS TO BROADBAND TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES IN RURAL AREAS.

Section 601(c)(2) of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 950bb(c)(2)) is amended—

(1) by striking “and” at the end of subparagraph (C);

(2) by redesignating subparagraph (D) as subparagraph (E) and, in such subparagraph, by striking “in the applications of the applicants”; and

(3) by inserting after subparagraph (C) the following new subparagraph (D):

“(D) give priority to applicants that offer to provide broadband service, at better than the minimum acceptable level of broadband service established under subsection (e), to agricultural producers in the proposed service territory to improve their ability to conduct precision farming or ranching, as determined by the Secretary; and”.

SEC. 3. UNIVERSAL SERVICE SUPPORT FOR BROADBAND

SERVICE INSTALLATION CHARGES FOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS.

Section 254 of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 254) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(m) SUPPORT FOR BROADBAND SERVICE INSTALLATION CHARGES FOR AGRICULTURAL PRODUCERS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—A provider of broadband service serving a geographic area shall, upon a bona fide request from an agricultural producer for connection to such service to improve the ability of the producer to conduct precision farming or ranching, install any line or other facility or equipment necessary to enable such connection at a discount from the amount that the provider would charge other parties for a similar installation.

“(2) AMOUNT OF DISCOUNT.—The amount of the discount provided under paragraph (1) shall be the lesser of—

“(A) the amount that the provider would charge other parties for a similar installation; or

“(B) $15,000.

“(3) LIMIT OF ONE DISCOUNT PER AGRICULTURAL PRODUCER.—An agricultural producer may
not receive more than one discount under paragraph (1).

“(4) OFFSET OR REIMBURSEMENT.—A provider of broadband service that makes an installation under paragraph (1) shall—

“(A) have an amount equal to the amount of the discount provided under such paragraph treated as an offset to its obligation to contribute to the mechanisms to preserve and advance universal service; or

“(B) notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (e), receive reimbursement utilizing the support mechanisms to preserve and advance universal service.

“(5) CONSISTENCY WITH RURAL BROADBAND ACCESS PROGRAM.—The Commission shall, in consultation with the Secretary of Agriculture, promulgate such regulations as are necessary to ensure that this subsection is carried out in a manner that is consistent with the manner in which the Secretary of Agriculture carries out subparagraph (D) of section 601(c)(2) of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 (7 U.S.C. 950bb(e)(2)).”.