

115TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 2941

To improve the Cooperative Observer Program of the National Weather Service, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 23, 2018

Mr. THUNE introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

A BILL

To improve the Cooperative Observer Program of the National Weather Service, 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,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Strengthening the Co-
5 operative Observer Program Act of 2018”.

6 **SEC. 2. IMPROVEMENTS TO COOPERATIVE OBSERVER PRO-**
7 **GRAM OF NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE.**

8 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary of Com-
9 merce for Oceans and Atmosphere, acting through the Na-

1 tional Weather Service, shall improve the Cooperative Ob-
2 server Program by—

3 (1) providing support to—

4 (A) State-coordinated programs relating to
5 the Program; and

6 (B) States and regions where observations
7 provided through the Program are scarce;

8 (2) working with State weather service head-
9 quarters to increase participation in the Program
10 and to add stations in States and regions described
11 in paragraph (1)(B);

12 (3) where feasible, ensuring that data streams
13 from stations that have been contributing data to
14 the Program for more than 50 years are maintained
15 and continually staffed by volunteers;

16 (4) prioritizing the recruitment of new volun-
17 teers for the Program;

18 (5) ensuring that opportunities exist for auto-
19 mated reporting to lessen the burden on volunteers
20 to collect and report data by hand; and

21 (6) ensuring that integrated reporting is avail-
22 able for qualitative observations that cannot be auto-
23 mated, such as snow observations and hazardous
24 weather events, to ensure that volunteers in the Pro-

1 gram can report and upload observations quickly
2 and easily.

3 (b) COORDINATION WITH STATES AND REGIONS.—

4 Not less frequently than every 180 days, the National
5 Weather Service shall coordinate with State and regional
6 offices with respect to the status of Cooperative Observer
7 Program stations.

8 (c) COORDINATION WITH FEDERAL AGENCIES.—The

9 National Weather Service shall coordinate with other Fed-
10 eral agencies, including the Forest Service, the Depart-
11 ment of Agriculture, and the United States Geological
12 Survey, to leverage opportunities to grow the Cooperative
13 Observer Program network and to more effectively use ex-
14 isting infrastructure, weather stations, and staff of the
15 Program.

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