

Calendar No. 644

115TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 2941

[Report No. 115–357]

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 (for himself and Mr. GARDNER) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

NOVEMBER 14, 2018

Reported by Mr. THUNE, with an amendment

[Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in *italic*]

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~~”.

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

3 (a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Under Secretary of Com-
4 merce for Oceans and Atmosphere, acting through the Na-
5 tional Weather Service, shall improve the Cooperative Ob-
6 server Program by—

7 (1) providing support to—

8 (A) State-coordinated programs relating to
9 the Program; and

10 (B) States and regions where observations
11 provided through the Program are scarce;

12 (2) working with State weather service head-
13 quarters to increase participation in the Program
14 and to add stations in States and regions described
15 in paragraph (1)(B);

16 (3) where feasible, ensuring that data streams
17 from stations that have been contributing data to
18 the Program for more than 50 years are maintained
19 and continually staffed by volunteers;

20 (4) prioritizing the recruitment of new volun-
21 teers for the Program;

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

25 (6) ensuring that integrated reporting is avail-
26 able for qualitative observations that cannot be auto-

1 mated, such as snow observations and hazardous
2 weather events, to ensure that volunteers in the Pro-
3 gram can report and upload observations quickly
4 and easily.

5 (b) COORDINATION WITH STATES AND REGIONS.—
6 Not less frequently than every 180 days, the National
7 Weather Service shall coordinate with State and regional
8 offices with respect to the status of Cooperative Observer
9 Program stations.

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

18 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

19 *This Act may be cited as the “Strengthening the Coop-*
20 *erative Observer Program Act of 2018”.*

21 **SEC. 2. IMPROVEMENTS TO COOPERATIVE OBSERVER PRO-**
22 **GRAM OF NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE.**

23 (a) *IN GENERAL.*—*The Under Secretary of Commerce*
24 *for Oceans and Atmosphere, acting through the National*

1 *Weather Service, shall improve the Cooperative Observer*
2 *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 the*
14 *Program for more than 50 years are maintained and*
15 *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 to*
20 *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 drought conditions, snow observations,*
24 *and hazardous weather events, to ensure that volun-*

1 *teers in the Program can report and upload observa-*
2 *tions quickly and easily.*

3 *(b) COORDINATION WITH STATES AND REGIONS.—Not*
4 *less frequently than every 180 days, the National Weather*
5 *Service shall coordinate with State and regional offices with*
6 *respect to the status of Cooperative Observer Program sta-*
7 *tions.*

8 *(c) COORDINATION WITH FEDERAL AGENCIES.—The*
9 *National Weather Service shall coordinate with other Fed-*
10 *eral agencies, including the Forest Service, the Department*
11 *of Agriculture, and the United States Geological Survey,*
12 *to leverage opportunities to grow the Cooperative Observer*
13 *Program network and to more effectively use existing infra-*
14 *structure, weather stations, and staff of the Program.*

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