

115TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# S. 2959

To direct the Federal Communications Commission to establish the Office of Rural Broadband, and for other purposes.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 24, 2018

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

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## A BILL

To direct the Federal Communications Commission to establish the Office of Rural Broadband, 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 “Office of Rural  
5 Broadband Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. OFFICE OF RURAL BROADBAND.**

7 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

1           (1) AGENCY.—The term “agency” has the  
2 meaning given the term in section 551 of title 5,  
3 United States Code.

4           (2) BROADBAND.—The term “broadband” has  
5 the meaning given the term “advanced telecommuni-  
6 cations capability” in section 706 of the Tele-  
7 communications Act of 1996 (47 U.S.C. 1302).

8           (3) COMMISSION.—The term “Commission”  
9 means the Federal Communications Commission.

10          (4) OFFICE.—The term “Office” means the Of-  
11 fice of Rural Broadband established under sub-  
12 section (b).

13          (5) RURAL.—The term “rural” has the mean-  
14 ing given the term in section 54.505(b)(3) of title  
15 47, Code of Federal Regulations, or any successor  
16 regulation.

17          (b) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 1 year after  
18 the date of enactment of this Act, the Commission shall  
19 establish an Office of Rural Broadband.

20          (c) DUTIES.—The Office shall have the following du-  
21 ties:

22           (1) Coordinate efforts with the Rural Utilities  
23 Service of the Department of Agriculture and the  
24 National Telecommunications and Information Ad-

1       ministration to ensure the mutual and complemen-  
2       tary success of—

3               (A) the initiatives of the Commission; and

4               (B) the programs overseen by the other  
5       agencies described in this paragraph.

6       (2) Coordinate with the Universal Service Ad-  
7       ministrative Company to maintain updated informa-  
8       tion regarding programs that deploy rural  
9       broadband.

10       (3) Coordinate with other agencies to remove  
11       barriers to broadband deployment.

12       (4) Assess, and publish the assessment of, the  
13       impact of proposed actions of the Commission on  
14       rural consumers before the actions are voted upon or  
15       taken.

16       (5) Track broadband internet subscription rates  
17       in rural areas, using data collected by the Bureau of  
18       the Census under section 103(d) of the Broadband  
19       Data Improvement Act (47 U.S.C. 1303(d)).

20       (6) Coordinate with other bureaus and offices  
21       of the Commission and other agencies to ensure con-  
22       sistency and updating of broadband mapping in  
23       rural areas.

24       (7) Include in the Communications Marketplace  
25       Report required under section 13 of the Communica-

1        tions Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 163) a report on the  
2        efforts of the Office to promote and sustain quality  
3        and affordable rural communications services, in-  
4        cluding voice service and broadband service.

5            (8) Dedicate a representative to address stake-  
6        holder questions and concerns.

7        (d) NO ADDITIONAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—  
8        Nothing in this section shall create any additional report-  
9        ing requirement for a broadband provider.

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