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1st Session

SENATE

{ REPORT
119-11

AM RADIO FOR EVERY VEHICLE ACT
OF 2025

R E P O R T

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND
TRANSPORTATION

ON

S. 315



APRIL 3, 2025.—Ordered to be printed

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SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

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Mr. CRUZ, from the Committee on Commerce, Science, and
Transportation, submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany S. 315]

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, to which was referred the bill (S. 315) to require the Secretary of Transportation to issue a rule requiring access to AM broadcast stations in passenger motor vehicles, and for other purposes, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon with an amendment in the nature of a substitute and recommends that the bill, as amended, do pass.

PURPOSE OF THE BILL

The purpose of S. 315, the AM Radio for Every Vehicle Act of 2025, is to require the Secretary of Transportation to issue a rule requiring AM radio in passenger motor vehicles and to require a study about the role of AM radio in passenger motor vehicles to transmit public alerts and warnings.

BACKGROUND AND NEEDS

AM, or amplitude modulation, radio stations serve a critical role in our Emergency Alert System (EAS), which broadcasts warnings to the public. EAS distributes emergency alerts via multiple broadcast, cable, and satellite systems, beginning with 72 National Public Warning System primary entry point (PEP) stations.¹ Eighty-six

¹Dana A. Scherer, *AM Broadcast Radio in Motor Vehicles*, Congressional Research Service, R48315, p. 9, updated February 11, 2025 (https://www.congress.gov/crs_external_products/R/PDF/R48315/R48315.6.pdf) (citing Federal Communications Commission, *Report: October 4, 2023*

Continued

percent of these stations are broadcast AM stations,² making AM radio stations the typical initial points of contact for emergency alerts that are then retransmitted to other electronic media.

AM radio, therefore, is critical to domestic emergency management. With this in mind, Congress directed the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System Modernization Act of 2015 to upgrade PEP stations across the country to maintain broadcast radio services during emergencies.³ PEPs are designed to withstand natural disasters and acts of terrorism, and are equipped with backup communication devices and power generators to allow for continuity of service.⁴ (Because it is a nationwide service, SiriusXM satellite radio backs up the PEP system for nationwide emergency alerts but not for State and local alerts.)⁵

Some critics of AM radio's role in EAS say it is highly susceptible to interference.⁶ In response to a December 2022 letter from Senator Edward Markey questioning automakers' (i.e., original equipment manufacturers or OEMs) decision not to include broadcast AM radio in battery-powered electric vehicles, several OEMs responded that new technology used in electric vehicles (EVs) interferes with AM broadcast signals with varied explanations about engineering counter measures to avoid AM radio or car performance issues or decisions to remove AM radio from certain models.⁷ For example, BMW said it decided not to include AM radio in recent EV and hybrid models because "electromagnetic interference [EMI] creates poor analog AM radio reception quality" and the technology is outdated.⁸ However, other automakers disagreed. Kia said it was "not aware of any issues with [EMI] with AM signals from our EVs."⁹ Ford, after initially removing AM radio,¹⁰ reversed its decision in May 2023 after coming to recognize "the importance of AM broadcast radio as a part of the emergency alert system."¹¹

Given the Federal investments in upgrading and equipping PEP stations around the United States, as well as the role AM radio

Nationwide Emergency Alert Test, p. 29, June 2024 (<https://docs.fcc.gov/public/attachments/DOC-403500A1.pdf>).

²Scherer, *supra* note 1, at 10 (citing "Emergency Management/Tools for Practitioners/Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS)/ Broadcasters and Wireless Providers, Federal Emergency Management Agency," last updated December 14, 2023 (<https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/practitioners/integrated-public-alert-warning-system/broadcasters-wireless>)).

³Scherer, *supra* note 1, at 10 (citing Public Law 114 143, section 2(d) (6 U.S.C. 321o)).

⁴Scherer, *supra* note 1, at 10 (citing FEMA and KIRO-AM Seattle to Unveil New Emergency Broadcast Studio, Federal Emergency Management Agency, November 18, 2021 (<https://www.fema.gov/press-release/20211118/fema-and-kiro-am-seattle-unveil-new-emergency-broadcast-studio>)).

⁵Scherer, *supra* note 1, at 10.

⁶Scherer, *supra* note 1, at 1 (citing Federal Communications Commission, Revitalization of the AM Radio Service, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, FCC 13 139, FCC Record, vol. 28 (2013), no. 18, pp. 15221 15223 (<https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc282355/m1/721/?q=fcc%20record%20volume%2028>)).

⁷Scherer, *supra* note 1, at 4–5 (citing Senator Edward J. Markey, "Senator Markey Criticizes Eight Automakers for Removing Broadcast AM Radio from Vehicles," press release, March 8, 2023 (<https://www.markey.senate.gov/news/press-releases/senator-markey-criticizes-eight-automakers-for-removing-broadcast-am-radio-from-vehicles>)).

⁸Letter from Adam McNeill, vice president of engineering, BMW of North America, LLC, BMW Group Company, to Senator Edward J. Markey, December 20, 2022 (https://www.markey.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/letters_of_automaker_responses_-_030823pdf.pdf).

⁹Letter from Christopher Wenk, vice president of government affairs, Kia Corporation, to Senator Edward J. Markey, December 22, 2022 (https://www.markey.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/letters_of_automaker_responses_-_030823pdf.pdf).

¹⁰*Supra* note 7.

¹¹Jim Farley (@jimfarley98), X, May 23, 2023 (<https://x.com/jimfarley98/status/1661024295110463491>).

stations play in the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System (IPAWS) and during times of disaster and emergency response, the Committee believes the decision by OEMs to remove broadcast AM radio from vehicles presents a public safety concern. To address this concern, this legislation requires the Secretary of the Department of Transportation (DOT) to issue a rule requiring access to AM broadcast stations in passenger motor vehicles at no additional charge.

The Committee is sensitive to the fact that technology evolves over time, which may impact the need for this rule. To address this possibility, the legislation also instructs the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to study the advantages, effectiveness, limitations, resilience, and accessibility of IPAWS via AM radio or other technologies in passenger motor vehicles and efforts to integrate new or emerging technologies in IPAWS.

SUMMARY OF PROVISIONS

S. 315, the AM Radio for Every Vehicle Act of 2025, would do the following:

- Require the Secretary of the DOT, in consultation with the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), to issue a rule requiring devices that can receive signals and play content transmitted by AM broadcast stations be installed as standard equipment in passenger motor vehicles manufactured in the United States, imported into the United States, or shipped in interstate commerce after the effective date of the rule.
- Sunset the rule and its enforcement 10 years after the date of enactment.
- Require the GAO to study the role of passenger motor vehicles in IPAWS, assess AM radio and alternative communication systems for delivering emergency alerts and critical public safety information distributed by IPAWS to drivers and passengers of motor vehicles, and describe efforts to integrate new and emerging technologies into IPAWS. The GAO would be required to brief the appropriate committees of Congress not later than 1 year after enactment and provide a report not later than 180 days after the briefing.
- Require the Secretary of DOT, in coordination with the FEMA Administrator and the FCC, to provide a report not less frequently than once every 5 years after the date on which the Secretary issues the rule, on the impacts of the rule and possible changes to IPAWS communication technologies that would enable resilient and accessible alerts to drivers and passengers of passenger motor vehicles.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

S. 315 was introduced on January 29, 2025, by Senator Markey (for himself and Senators Cruz, Baldwin, Banks, Barrasso, Blackburn, Blumenthal, Britt, Budd, Cantwell, Capito, Coons, Cotton, Cramer, Daines, Ernst, Fischer, Grassley, Hassan, Hawley, Hirono, Hoeven, Justice, King, Klobuchar, Lankford, Luján, Lummis, Marshall, Merkley, Moran, Murphy, Reed, Ricketts, Rounds, Sanders, Scott (FL), Shaheen, Sheehy, Smith, Sullivan, Wyden, Young, and Wicker) and was referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate. Senators Collins, Moreno, Mur-

kowski, Mullin, Cortez Masto, Rosen, Boozman, McCormick, Warren, Whitehouse, Crapo, Ossoff, Kennedy, Tuberville, Moody, and Gillibrand are additional cosponsors. On February 5, 2025, the Committee met in open Executive Session and, by voice vote, ordered S. 315 reported favorably with an amendment (in the nature of a substitute).

ESTIMATED COSTS

In accordance with paragraph 11(a) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate and section 403 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the Committee provides the following cost estimate, prepared by the Congressional Budget Office:

S. 315, AM Radio for Every Vehicle Act of 2025			
As ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation on February 5, 2025			
By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars	2025	2025-2030	2025-2035
Direct Spending (Outlays)	0	0	0
Revenues	*	*	*
Increase or Decrease (-) in the Deficit	*	*	*
Spending Subject to Appropriation (Outlays)	*	1	not estimated
Increases <i>net direct spending</i> in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2036?	No	Statutory pay-as-you-go procedures apply? Yes	
		Mandate Effects	
Increases <i>on-budget deficits</i> in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2036?	No	Contains intergovernmental mandate?	Yes, Under Threshold
		Contains private-sector mandate?	Yes, Under Threshold
* = between -\$500,000 and \$500,000.			

S. 315 would direct the Department of Transportation (DOT) to issue a rule requiring that AM broadcast stations be accessible in all passenger motor vehicles imported into, shipped within, or manufactured and sold within the United States. (Passenger motor vehicles are those designed to primarily carry their operator and up to 12 passengers; the definition does not include motorcycles.) The bill would require DOT to issue the rule within one year of enactment and report to the Congress at least every five years on the rule's effects. The rule would sunset 10 years after enactment.

Additionally, S. 315 would require the Government Accountability Office (GAO) within 18 months of enactment to report on the role AM broadcasts in passenger vehicles play in disseminating emergency alerts through the Integrated Public Alert and Warning System.

Using information on the cost of issuing similar rules and reports, CBO estimates that implementing the bill would cost DOT and GAO a total of \$1 million over the 2025–2030 period. Any spending would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

Additionally, S. 315 would authorize DOT to assess civil penalties on manufacturers that fail to comply with the new rule; such penalties are recorded as revenues. CBO estimates that any additional revenues collected would total less than \$500,000 over the

2025–2035 period because the number of violations would probably be small.

The bill would impose a private-sector mandate as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA) on the manufacturers of passenger vehicles sold in the United States by requiring them to provide access to AM broadcast stations at no cost to the consumer. Prior to the regulation taking effect, manufacturers would be required to provide access to AM broadcast stations in unequipped vehicles at no cost if requested.

CBO expects this would primarily affect manufacturers of electric vehicles (EVs) who have removed, or announced plans to remove, standard AM radio equipment from their vehicles. The bill also would prohibit future phase-outs in other vehicles where the equipment is standard, such as gasoline and diesel passenger vehicles, while the rule is in effect.

Based on sales data for EVs, the legislation would require manufacturers to update radio equipment in about 2 to 2.5 million vehicles each year. Since most EVs are already equipped with FM radio, this would likely result in a small increase in production costs to update the media system software and modify other radio components. CBO estimates the total cost of the mandate would be several millions of dollars each year the requirement is in effect and would not exceed the annual threshold established in UMRA for private-sector mandates (\$206 million in 2025, adjusted annually for inflation).

As a result of the legislation, some manufacturers may elect to make other modifications to the vehicle as well to improve audio quality. These modifications are not considered part of the costs to comply with the mandate because they would be made at the discretion of the manufacturer.

The bill also would preempt state and local laws by prohibiting those entities from enforcing any laws or regulations pertaining to the access of AM broadcast stations in passenger vehicles. CBO estimates that the preemption would not result in an increase in or loss of revenue to state or local governments and therefore would fall well below the threshold in UMRA for intergovernmental mandates (\$103 million in 2025, adjusted annually for inflation).

The CBO staff contacts for this estimate are Willow Latham-Proença (for federal costs) and Brandon Lever (for mandates). The estimate was reviewed by H. Samuel Papenfuss, Deputy Director of Budget Analysis.

PHILLIP L. SWAGEL,
Director, Congressional Budget Office.

REGULATORY IMPACT STATEMENT

In accordance with paragraph 11(b) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee provides the following evaluation of the regulatory impact of the legislation, as reported:

Number of Persons Covered

S. 315 is intended to bolster public safety and preserve investments made by the Federal Government in the National Public Warning System by requiring the Secretary of DOT to issue a rule that broadcast AM radio be available in every passenger motor vehicle manufactured in, imported into, or shipped in interstate com-

merce within the United States for a 10-year period. The bill affects the manufacturers, importers, and shippers of passenger motor vehicles in the United States, all of which are already subject to regulation by DOT. Therefore, the number of persons covered should be consistent with the current levels of manufacturers, importers, and shippers subject to regulation by DOT and its various modal administrations like the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Economic Impact

S. 315 would have minimal economic impact on OEMs and individuals who purchase vehicles. While the bill would impose an unfunded private-sector mandate on manufacturers of passenger vehicles by requiring them to provide consumers access to AM broadcast stations at no cost, the Congressional Budget Office estimates the total cost of the mandate would not exceed the annual threshold established in Unfunded Mandates Reform Act for private-sector mandates. With regards to private individuals or businesses, the bill would require manufacturers, in the period between issuance of the rule and its effective date, to provide clear and conspicuous labeling to inform purchasers if a motor vehicle does not include AM radio. Clear and conspicuous labeling is already required of the manufacturers for various items like fuel economy.

Privacy

S. 315 would not have an impact on the personal privacy of individuals.

Paperwork

The Committee anticipates some increase in paperwork burdens resulting from the passage of this legislation. There may be an increase of paperwork associated with manufacturers documenting compliance with this law. The bill requires a GAO report that would study disseminating emergency alerts and warnings to the public and assess the role of passenger motor vehicles in IPAWS communications.

The Secretary of the DOT, in coordination with the FEMA Administrator and the FCC, would be required to provide a report not less frequently than once every 5 years after the date on which the Secretary issues the rule, on the impacts of the rule and possible changes to IPAWS communication technologies that would enable resilient and accessible alerts to drivers and passengers of passenger motor vehicles.

CONGRESSIONALLY DIRECTED SPENDING

In compliance with paragraph 4(b) of rule XLIV of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee provides that no provisions contained in the bill, as reported, meet the definition of congressionally directed spending items under the rule.

SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

Section 1. Short title.

This section would provide that the bill may be cited as the “AM Radio for Every Vehicle Act of 2025”.

Section 2. Definitions.

This section would define the terms “Administrator”, “AM broadcast band”, “AM broadcast station”, “appropriate committees of Congress”, “Comptroller General”, “device”, “digital audio AM broadcast station”, “IPAWS”, “manufacturer”, “passenger motor vehicle”, “radio broadcast station”, “radio station license”, “receive”, “Secretary”, “signal”, “standard equipment”, and “State”.

Section 3. AM broadcast stations rule.

This section would require the Secretary of Transportation, in consultation with the FEMA Administrator and the FCC, to issue a rule requiring devices that can receive AM broadcast signals and play content transmitted be installed as standard equipment in passenger motor vehicles manufactured in the United States, imported into the United States, or shipped in interstate commerce after the effective date of the rule.

In the interim period between issuance of the rule and its effective date, it would require car manufacturers to provide clear and conspicuous labeling to inform purchasers if a passenger motor vehicle does not include AM radio and prohibit manufacturers from up charging for access to AM radio in the interim period.

This section would also require GAO to conduct a study on disseminating emergency alerts and warnings to the public, including an assessment of IPAWS communications. GAO would be required to brief the appropriate committees of Congress on the results of the study not later than 1 year after the date of enactment, as well as to submit a corresponding report not later than 180 days after the date of the briefing. It would also require the Secretary of DOT, in coordination with the FEMA Administrator and the FCC, to provide a report not less frequently than once every 5 years after the date on which the Secretary issues the rule, on the impacts of the rule and possible changes to IPAWS communication technologies that would enable resilient and accessible alerts to drivers and passengers of passenger motor vehicles.

Lastly, this section would sunset the rule after 10 years from date of enactment.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW

In compliance with paragraph 12 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee states that the bill as reported would make no change to existing law.