



AMENDMENT NO. _____

Calendar No. _____

Purpose: In the nature of a substitute.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES—115th Cong., 2d Sess.

S. 2343

To require the Federal Communications Commission to establish a task force for meeting the connectivity and technology needs of precision agriculture in the United States.

Referred to the Committee on _____ and ordered to be printed

Ordered to lie on the table and to be printed

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE intended to be proposed by Mr. WICKER

Viz:

1 Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:
2

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the "Precision Agriculture
5 Connectivity Act of 2018".

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) Precision agriculture technologies and practices allow farmers to significantly increase crop
9 yields, eliminate overlap in operations, and reduce
10

1 inputs such as seed, fertilizer, pesticides, water, and
2 fuel.

3 (2) These technologies allow farmers to collect
4 data in real time about their fields, automate field
5 management, and maximize resources.

6 (3) Studies estimate that precision agriculture
7 technologies can reduce agricultural operation costs
8 by up to 25 dollars per acre and increase farm yields
9 by up to 70 percent by 2050.

10 (4) The critical cost savings and productivity
11 benefits of precision agriculture cannot be realized
12 without the availability of reliable broadband Inter-
13 net access service delivered to the agricultural land
14 of the United States.

15 (5) The deployment of broadband Internet ac-
16 cess service to unserved agricultural land is critical
17 to the United States economy and to the continued
18 leadership of the United States in global food pro-
19 duction.

20 (6) Despite the growing demand for broadband
21 Internet access service on agricultural land,
22 broadband Internet access service is not consistently
23 available where needed for agricultural operations.

24 (7) The Federal Communications Commission
25 has an important role to play in the deployment of

1 broadband Internet access service on unserved agri-
2 cultural land to promote precision agriculture.

3 **SEC. 3. TASK FORCE.**

4 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section—

5 (1) the term “broadband Internet access serv-
6 ice” has the meaning given the term in section 8.2
7 of title 47, Code of Federal Regulations, or any suc-
8 cessor regulation;

9 (2) the term “Commission” means the Federal
10 Communications Commission;

11 (3) the term “Department” means the Depart-
12 ment of Agriculture;

13 (4) the term “Secretary” means the Secretary
14 of Agriculture; and

15 (5) the term “Task Force” means the Task
16 Force for Reviewing the Connectivity and Tech-
17 nology Needs of Precision Agriculture in the United
18 States established under subsection (b).

19 (b) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 1 year after
20 the date of enactment of this Act, the Commission shall
21 establish the Task Force for Reviewing the Connectivity
22 and Technology Needs of Precision Agriculture in the
23 United States.

24 (c) DUTIES.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Task Force shall con-
2 sult with the Secretary, or a designee of the Sec-
3 retary, and collaborate with public and private
4 stakeholders in the agriculture and technology fields
5 to—

6 (A) identify and measure current gaps in
7 the availability of broadband Internet access
8 service on agricultural land;

9 (B) develop policy recommendations to
10 promote the rapid, expanded deployment of
11 broadband Internet access service on unserved
12 agricultural land, with a goal of achieving reli-
13 able capabilities on 95 percent of agricultural
14 land in the United States by 2025;

15 (C) promote effective policy and regulatory
16 solutions that encourage the adoption of
17 broadband Internet access service on farms and
18 ranches and promote precision agriculture;

19 (D) recommend specific new rules or
20 amendments to existing rules of the Commis-
21 sion that the Commission should issue to
22 achieve the goals and purposes of the policy rec-
23 ommendations described in subparagraph (B);

24 (E) recommend specific steps that the
25 Commission should take to obtain reliable and

1 standardized data measurements of the avail-
2 ability of broadband Internet access service as
3 may be necessary to target funding support,
4 from future programs of the Commission dedi-
5 cated to the deployment of broadband Internet
6 access service, to unserved agricultural land in
7 need of broadband Internet access service; and

8 (F) recommend specific steps that the
9 Commission should consider to ensure that the
10 expertise of the Secretary and available farm
11 data are reflected in future programs of the
12 Commission dedicated to the infrastructure de-
13 ployment of broadband Internet access service
14 and to direct available funding to unserved ag-
15 ricultural land where needed.

16 (2) NO DUPLICATE DATA REPORTING.—In per-
17 forming the duties of the Commission under para-
18 graph (1), the Commission shall ensure that no pro-
19 vider of broadband Internet access service is re-
20 quired to report data to the Commission that is, on
21 the day before the date of enactment of this Act, re-
22 quired to be reported by the provider of broadband
23 Internet access service.

24 (3) HOLD HARMLESS.—The Task Force and
25 the Commission shall not interpret the phrase “fu-

1 ture programs of the Commission”, as used in sub-
2 paragraphs (E) and (F) of paragraph (1), to include
3 the universal service programs of the Commission
4 established under section 254 of the Communica-
5 tions Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 254).

6 (4) CONSULTATION.—The Secretary, or a des-
7 ignee of the Secretary, shall explain and make avail-
8 able to the Task Force the expertise, data mapping
9 information, and resources of the Department that
10 the Department uses to identify cropland, rangeland,
11 and other areas with agricultural operations that
12 may be helpful in developing the recommendations
13 required under paragraph (1).

14 (5) LIST OF AVAILABLE FEDERAL PROGRAMS
15 AND RESOURCES.—Not later than 180 days after
16 the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary and
17 the Commission shall jointly submit to the Task
18 Force a list of all Federal programs or resources
19 available for the expansion of broadband Internet ac-
20 cess service on unserved agricultural land to assist
21 the Task Force in carrying out the duties of the
22 Task Force.

23 (d) MEMBERSHIP.—

24 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Task Force shall be—

1 (A) composed of not more than 15 voting
2 members who shall—

3 (i) be selected by the Chairman of the
4 Commission; and

5 (ii) include—

6 (I) agricultural producers rep-
7 resenting diverse geographic regions
8 and farm sizes, including owners and
9 operators of farms of less than 100
10 acres;

11 (II) an agricultural producer rep-
12 resenting tribal agriculture;

13 (III) Internet service providers,
14 including regional or rural fixed and
15 mobile broadband Internet access
16 service providers and telecommuni-
17 cations infrastructure providers;

18 (IV) representatives from the
19 electric cooperative industry;

20 (V) representatives from the sat-
21 ellite industry;

22 (VI) representatives from preci-
23 sion agriculture equipment manufac-
24 turers, including drone manufactur-
25 ers, manufacturers of autonomous ag-

1 ricultural machinery, and manufactur-
2 ers of farming robotics technologies;
3 and

4 (VII) representatives from State
5 and local governments; and

6 (B) fairly balanced in terms of tech-
7 nologies, points of view, and fields represented
8 on the Task Force.

9 (2) PERIOD OF APPOINTMENT; VACANCIES.—

10 (A) IN GENERAL.—A member of the Com-
11 mittee appointed under paragraph (1)(A) shall
12 serve for a single term of 2 years.

13 (B) VACANCIES.—Any vacancy in the Task
14 Force—

15 (i) shall not affect the powers of the
16 Task Force; and

17 (ii) shall be filled in the same manner
18 as the original appointment.

19 (3) EX-OFFICIO MEMBER.—The Secretary, or a
20 designee of the Secretary, shall serve as an ex-offi-
21 cio, nonvoting member of the Task Force.

22 (e) REPORTS.—Not later than 1 year after the date
23 on which the Commission establishes the Task Force, and
24 annually thereafter, the Task Force shall submit to the
25 Chairman of the Commission a report, which shall be

1 made public not later than 30 days after the date on which
2 the Chairman receives the report, that details—

3 (1) the status of fixed and mobile broadband
4 Internet access service coverage of agricultural land;

5 (2) the projected future connectivity needs of
6 agricultural operations, farmers, and ranchers; and

7 (3) the steps being taken to accurately measure
8 the availability of broadband Internet access service
9 on agricultural land and the limitations of current,
10 as of the date of the report, measurement processes.

11 (f) TERMINATION.—The Commission shall renew the
12 Task Force every 2 years until the Task Force terminates
13 on January 1, 2025.