

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. _____

To provide guidance for and investment in the upgrade and modernization of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Weather Radio All Hazards network, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Ms. CANTWELL (for herself and Mr. CRUZ) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on

A BILL

To provide guidance for and investment in the upgrade and modernization of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Weather Radio All Hazards network, 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 “NOAA Weather Radio
5 Modernization Act of 2023” or the “NWR Modernization
6 Act of 2023”.

1 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

2 (a) NOAA WEATHER RADIO.—The term “NOAA
3 Weather Radio” means the National Oceanic and Atmos-
4 pheric Administration Weather Radio All Hazards net-
5 work.

6 (b) UNDER SECRETARY.—The term “Under Sec-
7 retary” means the Under Secretary of Commerce for
8 Oceans and Atmosphere and the Administrator of the Na-
9 tional Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

10 **SEC. 3. UPGRADING EXISTING SYSTEMS.**

11 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary shall, to the
12 maximum extent practicable, upgrade systems of NOAA
13 Weather Radio in use as of the date of the enactment of
14 this Act in order to expand coverage and ensure the reli-
15 ability of NOAA Weather Radio.

16 (b) REQUIREMENTS.—In carrying out subsection (a),
17 the Under Secretary shall—

18 (1) maintain support for systems described in
19 such subsection that serve areas not covered by or
20 having poor quality cellular service;

21 (2) ensure consistent maintenance and oper-
22 ations monitoring, with timely repairs to equipment
23 and antennas at broadcast transmitter sites;

24 (3) enhance the ability to amplify non-weather
25 emergency messages through NOAA Weather Radio
26 as necessary; and

1 (4) acquire additional transmitters as required
2 to expand coverage to rural and underserved com-
3 munities, units of the National Park System, and
4 National Recreation Areas.

5 **SEC. 4. MODERNIZATION INITIATIVE.**

6 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary shall, to the
7 maximum extent practicable, modernize NOAA Weather
8 Radio to ensure the capabilities and coverage of NOAA
9 Weather Radio remain valuable to the public.

10 (b) REQUIREMENTS.—In carrying out subsection (a),
11 the Under Secretary shall—

12 (1) upgrade the telecommunications infrastruc-
13 ture of NOAA Weather Radio to accelerate the tran-
14 sition of broadcasts to media that provide an in-
15 crease in reliability and repairability over copper
16 media;

17 (2) accelerate software upgrades to the Ad-
18 vanced Weather Interactive Processing System of
19 the National Weather Service, or any relevant suc-
20 cessors of the system, in order to implement partial
21 county notifications and alerts;

22 (3) enhance the accessibility and usability of
23 data and feeds of NOAA Weather Radio, with the
24 feedback of the public and user groups;

1 (4) develop options, including satellite backup
2 capability and commercial provider partnerships, for
3 continuity of service provided by NOAA Weather
4 Radio in the event of outages among Weather Fore-
5 cast Offices;

6 (5) research and develop alternative options, in-
7 cluding microwave capabilities, to transmit signals
8 from NOAA Weather Radio to transmitters that are
9 remote or do not have Internet Protocol capability;
10 and

11 (6) transition critical applications to the Inte-
12 grated Dissemination Program of the National
13 Weather Service, or any relevant successors of the
14 program.

15 (c) PRIORITIES.—In carrying out subsections (a) and
16 (b), the Under Secretary shall prioritize practices, capa-
17 bilities, and technologies recommended in the assessment
18 required by subsection (d) in order to maximize the acces-
19 sibility of NOAA Weather Radio, particularly in remote
20 areas of the United States and areas that are at risk for
21 a lack of access to weather information in the event of
22 an emergency weather event.

23 (d) ASSESSMENT.—

24 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after
25 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Under

1 Secretary shall complete and submit to the Com-
2 mittee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of
3 the Senate and the Committee on Science, Space,
4 and Technology of the House of Representatives an
5 assessment of access to NOAA Weather Radio.

6 (2) CONSIDERATIONS AND RECOMMENDA-
7 TIONS.—In conducting the assessment required by
8 paragraph (1), the Under Secretary shall take into
9 consideration and provide recommendations on—

10 (A) the need for continuous, adequate, and
11 operational real-time broadcasts from NOAA
12 Weather Radio;

13 (B) solicited input on the compatibility of
14 NOAA Weather Radio data with third-party
15 platforms that provide online services, such as
16 websites and mobile device applications, or de-
17 liver access to NOAA Weather Radio;

18 (C) existing or new management systems,
19 which promote consistent, efficient, and com-
20 patible access to NOAA Weather Radio;

21 (D) the ability of the National Oceanic and
22 Atmospheric Administration to aggregate real-
23 time broadcast feeds at one or more central lo-
24 cations;

1 (E) effective coordination between agencies
2 with responsibilities relating to emergencies and
3 natural disasters;

4 (F) the potential effects of an electro-
5 magnetic pulse or geomagnetic disturbance on
6 NOAA Weather Radio; and

7 (G) improvements of hazardous weather
8 and water event communications to more clear-
9 ly inform action and increase the likelihood that
10 the public takes such action to prevent the loss
11 of life or property.