

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. _____

To establish a program to disseminate technical and other assistance to small and rural electric cooperatives to support expanding electric transmission capacity and hardening electric transmission and distribution infrastructure against cyberattacks and threats from natural hazards, with a focus on threats from wildfire, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. WYDEN introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To establish a program to disseminate technical and other assistance to small and rural electric cooperatives to support expanding electric transmission capacity and hardening electric transmission and distribution infrastructure against cyberattacks and threats from natural hazards, with a focus on threats from wildfire, 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,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Grid Resilience Im-
3 provement through Dedicated Assistance Act” or the
4 “GRID Assistance Act”.

5 **SEC. 2. GRID ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.**

6 Subtitle A of title I of division D of the Infrastructure
7 Investment and Jobs Act (42 U.S.C. 18711 et seq.) is
8 amended by adding at the end the following:

9 **“SEC. 40114. GRID ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.**

10 “(a) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

11 “(1) **ELIGIBLE ENTITY.**—The term ‘eligible en-
12 tity’ means—

13 “(A) a State government or the govern-
14 ment of any political subdivision of a State;

15 “(B) a federally recognized Indian Tribe;

16 “(C) an institution of higher education;

17 and

18 “(D) a not-for-profit organization.

19 “(2) **GRID ASSISTANT.**—The term ‘Grid Assist-
20 ant’ means an individual who is trained to provide
21 and support, on a professional basis, assistance (in-
22 cluding technical assistance) and informed decision-
23 making in the planning, financing, and implementa-
24 tion of electric transmission capacity expansion or
25 the hardening of electric transmission or distribution

1 infrastructure, including with respect to 1 or more
2 of the following:

3 “(A) Applicable Federal funding opportu-
4 nities and tax incentives.

5 “(B) Applicable State, local, and utility-
6 based incentives, including, as appropriate, co-
7 ordinating with the State energy office in that
8 State.

9 “(C) Project financing.

10 “(D) Grant writing.

11 “(E) Community-based capacity building,
12 including succession planning.

13 “(3) PROGRAM.—The term ‘Program’ means
14 the Grid Assistance Program established under sub-
15 section (b).

16 “(4) SECRETARY.—The term ‘Secretary’ means
17 the Secretary, acting through the Director of the
18 Grid Deployment Office.

19 “(5) STATE ENERGY OFFICE.—The term ‘State
20 energy office’ has the meaning given the term ‘State
21 energy agency’ in section 391 of the Energy Policy
22 and Conservation Act (42 U.S.C. 6371).

23 “(b) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary shall estab-
24 lish a program, to be known as the ‘Grid Assistance Pro-
25 gram’, under which the Secretary shall provide grants to

1 eligible entities for the hiring, training, and retention by
2 eligible entities of 1 or more Grid Assistants.

3 “(c) GRANTS.—

4 “(1) IN GENERAL.—To be eligible to receive a
5 grant under the Program, an eligible entity shall
6 submit to the Secretary an application at such time,
7 in such manner, and containing such information as
8 the Secretary may require.

9 “(2) TERM.—The term of a grant provided
10 under the Program shall be more than 3, but not
11 more than 6, years, as the Secretary determines to
12 be appropriate to achieve the purposes of this sec-
13 tion.

14 “(3) FEDERAL SHARE.—The Federal share of
15 the cost of carrying out activities under the grant
16 shall be not more than 80 percent.

17 “(4) PRIORITY.—In providing grants under the
18 Program, the Secretary shall give priority to an eli-
19 gible entity—

20 “(A) the application under paragraph (1)
21 of which is recommended by the director of the
22 relevant State energy office; or

23 “(B) that serves a rural electric coopera-
24 tive or utility that—

1 “(i) is owned by a subdivision of a
2 State, such as a municipal electric utility;
3 and

4 “(ii) operates primarily in an area at
5 high risk of wildfires, as determined using
6 the wildfire National Risk Index of the
7 Federal Emergency Management Agency.

8 “(d) GRID ASSISTANTS.—A Grid Assistant employed
9 by an eligible entity using a grant provided under this sec-
10 tion—

11 “(1) shall offer assistance and support de-
12 scribed in subsection (a)(2) to not fewer than 2
13 rural electric cooperatives or utilities owned by a
14 subdivision of a State (such as municipal electric
15 utilities) served by, or in the vicinity of, the eligible
16 entity; and

17 “(2) may provide technical assistance to the eli-
18 gible entity in applying for transmission capacity ex-
19 pansion and transmission and distribution resilience
20 opportunities under—

21 “(A) this Act and the amendments made
22 by this Act; and

23 “(B) Public Law 117–169 (commonly
24 known as the ‘Inflation Reduction Act of 2022’)
25 (136 Stat. 1818).

1 “(e) INFORMATION SHARING.—

2 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall facili-
3 tate the sharing among Grid Assistants of informa-
4 tion relating to best practices.

5 “(2) INFORMATION FROM OTHER AGENCIES.—

6 The Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of
7 Agriculture, the Secretary of Transportation, the
8 Secretary of the Treasury, the Administrator of the
9 Environmental Protection Agency, the Chief of En-
10 gineers, and the heads of such other Federal depart-
11 ments and agencies as the Secretary determines to
12 be appropriate, shall make available to Grid Assist-
13 ants information relating to other Federal incentives
14 available to eligible entities for transmission capacity
15 expansion and transmission and distribution resil-
16 ience projects.

17 “(f) REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—Not less frequently
18 than annually, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a
19 report describing the accomplishments of the Program, in-
20 cluding with respect to—

21 “(1) additional transmission capacity added to
22 the grid or transmission or distribution infrastruc-
23 ture hardened using assistance provided pursuant to
24 the Program;

25 “(2) monetary savings to communities; and

1 “(3) reductions in risks relating to—
2 “(A) natural hazards, including, at a min-
3 imum, wildfires; and
4 “(B) cyberattacks.
5 “(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
6 is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary to carry
7 out this section \$25,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2025
8 through 2029.”.