

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2818

To require the Secretary of Energy to establish a grant program for States to offset incremental rate increases paid by low-income households resulting from the implementation of infrastructure programs that are designed to accelerate the necessary replacement, repair, or maintenance of natural gas distribution systems, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APRIL 22, 2021

Ms. SHERRILL (for herself and Ms. BLUNT ROCHESTER) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

A BILL

To require the Secretary of Energy to establish a grant program for States to offset incremental rate increases paid by low-income households resulting from the implementation of infrastructure programs that are designed to accelerate the necessary replacement, repair, or maintenance of natural gas distribution systems, 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 “Mitigate Methane Now
5 Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. IMPROVING THE NATURAL GAS DISTRIBUTION SYS-**
2 **TEM.**

3 (a) PROGRAM.—The Secretary of Energy shall estab-
4 lish a grant program to provide financial assistance to
5 States to offset the incremental rate increases paid by low-
6 income households resulting from the implementation of
7 infrastructure replacement, repair, and maintenance pro-
8 grams that are approved by the rate-setting entity and de-
9 signed to accelerate the necessary replacement, repair, or
10 maintenance of natural gas distribution systems.

11 (b) DATE OF ELIGIBILITY.—Awards may be provided
12 under this section to offset rate increases described in sub-
13 section (a) occurring on or after the date of enactment
14 of this Act.

15 (c) PRIORITIZATION.—The Secretary shall collabo-
16 rate with States to prioritize the distribution of grants
17 made under this section. At a minimum, the Secretary
18 shall consider prioritizing the distribution of grants to
19 States which have—

20 (1) authorized or adopted enhanced infrastruc-
21 ture replacement programs or innovative rate recov-
22 ery mechanisms, such as infrastructure cost trackers
23 and riders, infrastructure base rate surcharges, de-
24 ferred regulatory asset programs, and earnings sta-
25 bility mechanisms; and

1 (2) a viable means for delivering financial as-
2 sistance to low-income households.

3 (d) AUDITING AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—

4 The Secretary shall establish auditing and reporting re-
5 quirements for States with respect to the performance of
6 eligible projects funded pursuant to grants awarded under
7 this section.

8 (e) PREVAILING WAGES.—All laborers and mechanics
9 employed by contractors or subcontractors in the perform-
10 ance of construction, alteration, or repair work assisted,
11 in whole or in part, by a grant under this section shall
12 be paid wages at rates not less than those prevailing on
13 similar construction in the locality as determined by the
14 Secretary of Labor in accordance with subchapter IV of
15 chapter 31 of title 40. With respect to the labor standards
16 in this subsection, the Secretary of Labor shall have the
17 authority and functions set forth in Reorganization Plan
18 Numbered 14 of 1950 (64 Stat. 1267; 5 U.S.C. App.) and
19 section 3145 of title 40.

20 (f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

21 (1) INNOVATIVE RATE RECOVERY MECHA-
22 NISMS.—The term “innovative rate recovery mecha-
23 nisms” means rate structures that allow State public
24 utility commissions to modify tariffs and recover

1 costs of investments in utility replacement incurred
2 between rate cases.

3 (2) LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLD.—The term
4 “low-income household” means a household that is
5 eligible to receive payments under section 2605(b)(2)
6 of the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Act of
7 1981 (42 U.S.C. 8624(b)(2)).

8 (g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
9 are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary to carry
10 out this section \$250,000,000 in each of fiscal years 2022
11 through 2031.

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