

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 7363

To prohibit a State or political subdivision thereof from providing or offering for sale to the public retail or wholesale broadband internet access service, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 25, 2020

Mr. LONG introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

A BILL

To prohibit a State or political subdivision thereof from providing or offering for sale to the public retail or wholesale broadband internet access service, 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 “Communities Over-
5 regulating Networks Need Economic Competition Today
6 Act” or the “CONNECT Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. PROHIBITION ON GOVERNMENT OWNED**
2 **BROADBAND NETWORKS.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subsections
4 (b)(1) and (c), a State or political subdivision thereof may
5 not provide or offer for sale to the public, a telecommuni-
6 cations provider, or to a commercial provider of broadband
7 internet access service, retail or wholesale broadband
8 internet access service.

9 (b) TRANSITIONAL RULE.—Any State or political
10 subdivision thereof providing or offering for sale, either
11 to the public, a telecommunications provider, or to a pro-
12 vider of broadband internet access service, retail or whole-
13 sale broadband internet access service, before the date of
14 the enactment of this section—

15 (1) notwithstanding subsection (a), may con-
16 tinue to provide or offer for sale such service if the
17 Commission finds there is no more than one other
18 commercial provider of broadband internet access
19 that provides competition for that service in a par-
20 ticular area;

21 (2) shall notify each subscriber of the State or
22 political subdivision if a commercial provider of re-
23 tail broadband internet access enters the market;
24 and

25 (3) may not construct or extend facilities used
26 to deliver broadband internet access service beyond

1 the geographic area in which the State or political
2 subdivision thereof lawfully operates.

3 (c) EXCEPTION.—Notwithstanding subsection (a),
4 this section does not apply to the Tennessee Valley Au-
5 thority.

6 (d) RULES OF CONSTRUCTION.—

7 (1) IN GENERAL.—This section may not be con-
8 strued to restrict a State or political subdivision
9 thereof, from allowing the nondiscriminatory use of
10 its rights-of-way, including access to utility poles,
11 conduits, ducts, or similar support structures used
12 for the deployment of facilities necessary to deliver
13 broadband internet access service.

14 (2) PUBLIC SAFETY.—This section may not be
15 construed to restrict a State or political subdivision
16 thereof, from providing broadband facilities or serv-
17 ices for 9–1–1, enhanced 9–1–1 service, or Next
18 Generation 9–1–1.

19 (e) LIMITATION OF COMMISSION AUTHORITY.—Not-
20 withstanding any provision of law, including section 706
21 of the Communications Act of 1934 (47 U.S.C. 706), the
22 Commission may not pre-empt State laws to permit a
23 State or political subdivision thereof to provide or offer
24 for sale to the public retail or wholesale broadband inter-
25 net access service.

1 (f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

2 (1) 9–1–1 REQUEST FOR EMERGENCY ASSIST-
3 ANCE.—The term “9–1–1 request for emergency as-
4 sistance” means a communication, such as voice,
5 text, picture, multimedia, or any other type of data
6 that is sent to an emergency communications center
7 for the purpose of requesting emergency assistance.

8 (2) BROADBAND INTERNET ACCESS SERVICE.—
9 The term “broadband internet access service” has
10 the meaning given that term in section 8.1(b) of title
11 47, Code of Federal Regulations, or any successor
12 regulation.

13 (3) COMMONLY ACCEPTED STANDARDS.—The
14 term “commonly accepted standards” means—

15 (A) the technical standards followed by the
16 communications industry for network, device,
17 and Internet Protocol connectivity, including
18 standards developed by the Third Generation
19 Partnership Project, the Institute of Electrical
20 and Electronics Engineers, the Alliance for
21 Telecommunications Industry Solutions, the
22 Internet Engineering Taskforce, and the Inter-
23 national Telecommunications Union; and

1 (B) standards that are accredited by a rec-
2 ognized authority such as the American Na-
3 tional Standards Institute.

4 (4) EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS CENTER.—
5 The term “emergency communications center”
6 means a facility that is designated to receive a 9-
7 1-1 request for emergency assistance and perform
8 one or more of the following functions:

9 (A) Process and analyze 9-1-1 requests
10 for emergency assistance and other gathered in-
11 formation.

12 (B) Dispatch appropriate emergency re-
13 sponse providers.

14 (C) Transfer or exchange 9-1-1 requests
15 for emergency assistance and other gathered in-
16 formation with other emergency communica-
17 tions centers and emergency response providers.

18 (D) Analyze any communications received
19 from emergency response providers.

20 (E) Support incident command functions.

21 (5) EMERGENCY RESPONSE PROVIDER.—The
22 term “emergency response provider”—

23 (A) has the meaning given that term under
24 section 2 of the Homeland Security Act (47
25 U.S.C. 101); and

1 (B) includes Federal, State, and local gov-
2 ernmental and nongovernmental emergency
3 public safety, fire, law enforcement, emergency
4 response, emergency medical (including hospital
5 emergency facilities), and related personnel,
6 agencies, and authorities.

7 (6) ENHANCED 9-1-1 SERVICE.—The term “en-
8 hanced 9-1-1 service” has the meaning given that
9 term in section 7(10) of the Wireless Communica-
10 tions and Public Safety Act of 1999 (47 U.S.C.
11 615b(10)).

12 (7) INTEROPERABLE.—The term “interoper-
13 able” means the capability of emergency communica-
14 tions centers to receive 9-1-1 requests for emer-
15 gency assistance and related data such as location
16 information and callback numbers from the public,
17 then process and share the 9-1-1 requests for emer-
18 gency assistance and related data with other emer-
19 gency communications centers and emergency re-
20 sponse providers, regardless of jurisdiction, equip-
21 ment, device, software, service provider, or other rel-
22 evant factors, and without the need for proprietary
23 interfaces.

1 (8) NEXT GENERATION 9–1–1.—The term
2 “Next Generation 9–1–1” means an interoperable,
3 secure, Internet Protocol-based system that—

4 (A) employs commonly accepted standards;

5 (B) enables the appropriate emergency
6 communications centers to receive, process, and
7 analyze all types of 9–1–1 requests for emer-
8 gency assistance;

9 (C) acquires and integrates additional in-
10 formation useful to handling 9–1–1 requests for
11 emergency assistance; and

12 (D) supports sharing information related
13 to 9–1–1 requests for emergency assistance
14 among emergency communications centers and
15 emergency response providers.

16 (9) STATE.—The term “State” means any
17 State of the United States, the District of Columbia,
18 Puerto Rico, American Samoa, Guam, the United
19 States Virgin Islands, the Northern Mariana Is-
20 lands, and any other territory or possession of the
21 United States.

22 (10) TELECOMMUNICATIONS PROVIDER.—The
23 term “telecommunications provider” means an eligi-
24 ble telecommunications carrier as designated under

1 section 214(e)(2) of the Communications Act of
2 1934 (47 U.S.C. 214(e)(2)).

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