

118TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# S. 4895

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.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 31, 2024

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

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## 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.”.

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