

S 2997

Securing Access to Networks in Disasters Act of 2016

Congress: 114 (2015–2017, Ended)

Chamber: Senate

Policy Area: Science, Technology, Communications

Introduced: May 26, 2016

Current Status: Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders. Calendar No. 702.

Latest Action: Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders. Calendar No. 702. (Dec 6, 2016)

Official Text: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/2997>

Sponsor

Name: Sen. Cantwell, Maria [D-WA]

Party: Democratic • **State:** WA • **Chamber:** Senate

Cosponsors (5 total)

Cosponsor	Party / State	Role	Date Joined
Sen. Booker, Cory A. [D-NJ]	D · NJ		May 26, 2016
Sen. Schumer, Charles E. [D-NY]	D · NY		May 26, 2016
Sen. Nelson, Bill [D-FL]	D · FL		Jun 14, 2016
Sen. Rubio, Marco [R-FL]	R · FL		Jul 6, 2016
Sen. Thune, John [R-SD]	R · SD		Sep 20, 2016

Committee Activity

Committee	Chamber	Activity	Date
Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee	Senate	Reported By	Dec 6, 2016

Subjects & Policy Tags

Policy Area:

Science, Technology, Communications

Related Bills

Bill	Relationship	Last Action
114 HR 3998	Related bill	May 24, 2016: Received in the Senate and Read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.

Securing Access to Networks in Disasters Act of 2016

(Sec. 2) This bill expresses the sense of Congress that voluntary policies outlined in the Wireless Network Resiliency Cooperative Framework should be adhered to by all parties to aid consumers, 9-1-1 professionals, first responders, and local governments in accessing communication services during emergencies.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) must publish a study on the public safety benefits, technical feasibility, and cost of providing the public with access to 9-1-1 services during times of emergency when mobile service is unavailable, through:

- telecommunications service provider-owned WiFi access points and other communications technologies operating on unlicensed spectrum, without requiring any login credentials;
- non-telecommunications service provider-owned WiFi access points; and
- other alternative means.

The types of emergencies subject to this bill are: (1) occasions or instances under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act for which the President determines that federal assistance is needed to supplement state and local efforts and capabilities to save lives and to protect property and public health and safety, or to lessen or avert the threat of a catastrophe in any part of the United States; or (2) an emergency declared by the governor of a state or U.S. territory.

The FCC's study must consider communications network provider liability, network operational security, and any existing actions or authorities among the states.

The Government Accountability Office must report on: (1) how executive departments can better ensure that essential communications services remain operational during emergencies, and (2) whether a nationwide directory of points of contact among providers of essential communications services is needed to facilitate the rapid restoration of services damaged during emergencies.

The Stafford Act is amended to expand the categories of essential communications service providers that may access a disaster site to restore and repair essential services in an emergency or major disaster without being denied or impeded by a federal agency. Services to be considered essential are wireline or mobile telephone service, Internet access service, radio or television broadcasting, cable service, or direct broadcast satellite service.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) must encourage the adoption of mutual aid agreements recognizing the credentials of essential service providers issued by all parties to such an agreement.

At the direction of the President, federal agencies may provide assistance essential to meeting immediate threats to life and property resulting from a major disaster by allowing access to essential service providers for establishing temporary, or restoring, communications services.

Actions Timeline

- **Dec 6, 2016:** Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. Reported by Senator Thune with an amendment in the nature of a substitute. With written report No. 114-392.
- **Dec 6, 2016:** Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General Orders. Calendar No. 702.
- **Jun 29, 2016:** Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. Ordered to be reported with an amendment in the nature of a substitute favorably.
- **May 26, 2016:** Introduced in Senate
- **May 26, 2016:** Read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. (Sponsor introductory remarks on measure: CR S3294)