

S 1642

ReConnecting Rural America Act of 2023

Congress: 118 (2023–2025, Ended)

Chamber: Senate

Policy Area: Science, Technology, Communications

Introduced: May 17, 2023

Current Status: Read twice and referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

Latest Action: Read twice and referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry. (May 17, 2023)

Official Text: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/senate-bill/1642>

Sponsor

Name: Sen. Welch, Peter [D-VT]

Party: Democratic • State: VT • Chamber: Senate

Cosponsors (3 total)

Cosponsor	Party / State	Role	Date Joined
Sen. Marshall, Roger [R-KS]	R · KS		May 17, 2023
Sen. Cramer, Kevin [R-ND]	R · ND		Feb 27, 2024
Sen. Smith, Tina [D-MN]	D · MN		Feb 27, 2024

Committee Activity

Committee	Chamber	Activity	Date
Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee	Senate	Referred To	May 17, 2023

Subjects & Policy Tags

Policy Area:

Science, Technology, Communications

Related Bills

Bill	Relationship	Last Action
118 HR 4227	Identical bill	Aug 21, 2023: Referred to the Subcommittee on Commodity Markets, Digital Assets, and Rural Development.

## **ReConnecting Rural America Act of 2023**

This bill merges the pilot ReConnect Loan and Grant Program with existing loans and grants provided by the Department of Agriculture (USDA) to facilitate broadband access to rural areas that lack sufficient access to broadband. It also requires that any unobligated amounts available for the pilot program be transferred and made available, without further appropriations, to the merged program. The bill authorizes the merged program through FY2028.

The bill specifies the eligibility criteria and other requirements that apply to the merged program, some of which are the same as the criteria and requirements that currently apply to the pilot program (e.g., the required minimum upload and download speeds).

Further, the bill (1) eliminates the authority of USDA to make loan guarantees, and (2) authorizes USDA to make combinations of grants and loans.

The bill also requires that recipients of grants and loans participate in specified federal programs that assist low-income individuals access broadband and telecommunication services.

## **Actions Timeline**

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