

§ 950bb–6. Federal broadband program coordination

(a) Consultation between USDA and NTIA

The Secretary shall consult with the Assistant Secretary to assist in the verification of eligibility of the broadband loan and grant programs of the Department of Agriculture. In providing assistance under the preceding sentence, the Assistant Secretary shall make available the broadband assessment and mapping capabilities of the National Telecommunications and Information Administration.

(b) Consultation between USDA and FCC

(1) By USDA

The Secretary shall consult with the Commission before providing broadband assistance for a project to serve an area with respect to which another entity is receiving Connect America Fund or Mobility Fund support under the Federal universal service support mechanisms established under section 254 of title 47.

(2) By FCC

The Commission shall consult with the Secretary before offering or providing Connect America Fund or Mobility Fund support under the Federal universal service support mechanisms established under section 254 of title 47 to serve an area with respect to which another entity has received broadband assistance under a loan or grant program of the Department of Agriculture.

(c) Report to Congress

Not later than 1 year after December 20, 2018, the Secretary, the Commission, and the Assistant Secretary shall submit to the Committee on Agriculture and the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report on how best to coordinate federally supported broadband programs and activities in order to achieve the following objectives:

(1) Promote high-quality broadband service that meets the long-term needs of rural residents and businesses, by evaluating the broadband service needs in rural areas for each decade through 2050.

(2) Support the long-term viability, sustainability, and utility of federally supported rural broadband infrastructure, by analyzing the technical capabilities of the technologies currently available and reasonably expected to be available by 2035 to meet the broadband service needs of rural residents identified under paragraph (1), including by analyzing the following:

(A) The real-world performance of such technologies, including data rates, latency, data usage restrictions, and other aspects of service quality, as defined by the Commission.

(B) The suitability of each such technology for residential, agricultural, educational, healthcare, commercial, and industrial purposes in rural areas.

(C) The cost to deploy and support such technologies in several rural geographies.

(D) The costs associated with online platforms, specifically the resulting constraints on rural network bandwidth.

(3) Identify and quantify the availability of broadband service and ongoing broadband deployment in rural areas, including ways to do the following:

(A) Harmonize broadband notification and reporting requirements and develop common verification procedures across all federally supported broadband programs.

(B) Consolidate and utilize the existing broadband service data.

(C) Collect and share data on those projects in rural areas where Federal programs are currently supporting broadband deployment, including areas with respect to which an entity is receiving—

(i) support under a broadband assistance program of the Department of Agriculture; or

(ii) Connect America Fund or Mobility Fund support under the Federal universal service support mechanisms established under section 254 of title 47.

(D) Leverage support technologies and services from online platforms for providers of broadband service in rural areas.

(d) Definitions

In this section:

(1) Assistant Secretary

The term “Assistant Secretary” means the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information.

(2) Commission

The term “Commission” means the Federal Communications Commission.

(3) Rural area

The term “rural area” has the meaning given the term in section 950bb(b)(3) of this title.

(Pub. L. 115–334, title VI, § 6212, Dec. 20, 2018, 132 Stat. 4744.)

Editorial Notes

CODIFICATION

Section was enacted as part of the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018, and not as part of the Rural Electrification Act of 1936 which comprises this chapter.

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

DEFINITION OF “SECRETARY”

“Secretary” means the Secretary of Agriculture, see section 2 of Pub. L. 115–334, set out as a note under section 9001 of this title.

SUBCHAPTER VII—GENERAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS

§ 950cc. Public notice, assessments, and reporting requirements

(a) Notice requirements

The Secretary shall promptly make available to the public,¹ a fully searchable database on

¹ So in original. The comma probably should not appear.