

112TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 191

To direct the Department of Homeland Security to undertake a study on emergency communications.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 26, 2011

Mr. LIEBERMAN (for himself and Ms. COLLINS) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

A BILL

To direct the Department of Homeland Security to undertake a study on emergency communications.

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 “Amateur Radio Emer-
5 gency Communications Enhancement Act of 2011”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) Nearly 700,000 amateur radio operators in
9 the United States are licensed by the Federal Com-

1 munications Commission in the Amateur Radio
2 Service.

3 (2) Amateur Radio Service operators provide,
4 on a volunteer basis, a valuable public service to
5 their communities, their States, and to the Nation,
6 especially in the area of national and international
7 disaster communications.

8 (3) Emergency and disaster relief communica-
9 tions services by volunteer Amateur Radio Service
10 operators have consistently and reliably been pro-
11 vided before, during, and after floods, hurricanes,
12 tornadoes, forest fires, earthquakes, blizzards, train
13 accidents, chemical spills and other disasters. These
14 communications services include services in connec-
15 tion with significant incidents, such as—

16 (A) hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Hugo, and
17 Andrew;

18 (B) the relief effort at the World Trade
19 Center and the Pentagon following the 2001
20 terrorist attacks; and

21 (C) the Oklahoma City bombing in April
22 1995.

23 (4) Amateur Radio Service has formal agree-
24 ments for the provision of volunteer emergency com-
25 munications activities with the Department of

1 Homeland Security, the Federal Emergency Man-
2 agement Agency, the National Weather Service, the
3 National Communications System, and the Associa-
4 tion of Public Safety Communications Officials, as
5 well as with disaster relief organizations, including
6 the American National Red Cross and the Salvation
7 Army.

8 (5) Section 1 of the joint resolution entitled
9 “Joint Resolution to recognize the achievements of
10 radio amateurs, and to establish support for such
11 amateurs as national policy”, approved October 22,
12 1994 (Public Law 103–408), included a finding that
13 stated: “Reasonable accommodation should be made
14 for the effective operation of amateur radio from
15 residences, private vehicles and public areas, and the
16 regulation at all levels of government should facili-
17 tate and encourage amateur radio operations as a
18 public benefit.”.

19 (6) Section 1805(c) of the Homeland Security
20 Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 757(c)) directs the Regional
21 Emergency Communications Coordinating Working
22 Group of the Department of Homeland Security to
23 coordinate their activities with ham and amateur
24 radio operators among the 11 other categories of

1 emergency organizations such as ambulance services,
2 law enforcement, and others.

3 (7) Amateur Radio Service, at no cost to tax-
4 payers, provides a fertile ground for technical self-
5 training in modern telecommunications, electronic
6 technology, and emergency communications tech-
7 niques and protocols.

8 (8) There is a strong Federal interest in the ef-
9 fective performance of Amateur Radio Service sta-
10 tions, and that performance must be given—

11 (A) support at all levels of government;

12 and

13 (B) protection against unreasonable regu-
14 lation and impediments to the provision of the
15 valuable communications provided by such sta-
16 tions.

17 **SEC. 3. STUDY OF ENHANCED USES OF AMATEUR RADIO IN**
18 **EMERGENCY AND DISASTER RELIEF COMMU-**
19 **NICATION AND FOR RELIEF OF RESTRIC-**
20 **TIONS.**

21 (a) **AUTHORITY.**—Not later than 180 days after the
22 date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Homeland
23 Security shall—

1 (1) undertake a study on the uses and capabilities
2 of Amateur Radio Service communications in
3 emergencies and disaster relief; and

4 (2) submit a report on the findings of the Secretary to Congress.

6 (b) SCOPE OF THE STUDY.—The study required by
7 this section shall—

8 (1) include a review of the importance of amateur radio emergency communications in furtherance
9 of homeland security missions relating to disasters,
10 severe weather, and other threats to lives and property in the United States, as well as recommendations for—

14 (A) enhancements in the voluntary deployment of amateur radio licensees in disaster and
15 emergency communications and disaster relief
16 efforts; and
17

18 (B) improved integration of amateur radio
19 operators in planning and furtherance of the
20 Department of Homeland Security initiatives;
21 and

22 (2)(A) identify impediments to enhanced Amateur Radio Service communications, such as the effects of unreasonable or unnecessary private land
23
24

1 use regulations on residential antenna installations;
2 and

3 (B) make recommendations regarding such im-
4 pediments for consideration by other Federal depart-
5 ments, agencies, and Congress.

6 (c) USE OF EXPERTISE AND INFORMATION.—In con-
7 ducting the study required by this section, the Secretary
8 of Homeland Security shall utilize the expertise of stake-
9 holder entities and organizations, including the amateur
10 radio, emergency response, and disaster communications
11 communities.

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