



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE
COST ESTIMATE

July 14, 2016

S. 2997
Securing Access to Networks in Disasters Act of 2016

*As ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
on June 29, 2016*

S. 2997 would direct the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to study ways to enhance access to telecommunications services during emergencies when mobile service is unavailable. The bill also would redefine the term “essential service provider” to explicitly include certain telecommunication mediums, such as Internet and cable services, in a list of entities that provide essential services. (Providers of essential services are generally provided access to disaster sites in order to restore and repair services during emergency situations.) Finally, S. 2997 would direct the General Accountability Office (GAO) to study ways the federal government could increase the resiliency of essential communication services during emergencies.

On the basis of information provided by the FCC, CBO estimates that carrying out the analysis required by the bill would increase the agency’s administrative costs by less than \$500,000; such spending would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds. Under current law, the FCC is authorized to collect fees sufficient to offset the cost of its regulatory activities each year. Therefore, CBO estimates that the net cost to implement those provisions would be negligible, assuming appropriation actions consistent with the agency’s authorities. Based on the costs of similar reports conducted by GAO, CBO estimates that the increased costs to GAO to conduct the required study would be insignificant.

Enacting S. 2997 would not affect direct spending or revenues; therefore, pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply. CBO estimates that enacting S. 2997 would not increase net direct spending or on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2027.

S. 2997 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act and would not affect the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

On June 8, 2016, CBO transmitted a cost estimate for H.R. 3998, the Securing Access to Networks in Disasters Act, as passed by the House of Representatives on May 23, 2016. The two pieces of legislation are similar and CBO's estimate of their budgetary effects are the same.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Stephen Rabent. The estimate was approved by H. Samuel Papenfuss, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.