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(Original Signature of Member)

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. _____

To improve the environmental review process for highway projects through the use of interactive, digital, cloud-based platforms and digital twins, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. JOHNSON of South Dakota introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To improve the environmental review process for highway projects through the use of interactive, digital, cloud-based platforms and digital twins, and for other purposes.

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 “Interactive Federal Re-
5 view Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. DIGITAL PLATFORMS AND DIGITAL TWINS FOR**
2 **NEPA REVIEWS FOR HIGHWAY PROJECTS.**

3 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

4 (1) COVERED PROJECT.—The term “covered
5 project” means a highway project that received a
6 grant under any of the following:

7 (A) The nationally significant freight and
8 highway projects program under section 117 of
9 title 23, United States Code (commonly known
10 as the “Infrastructure for Rebuilding America
11 (INFRA) grant program”).

12 (B) The national infrastructure project as-
13 sistance program under section 6701 of title 49,
14 United States Code (commonly known as the
15 “Mega grant program”).

16 (C) The local and regional project assist-
17 ance program under section 6702 of title 49,
18 United States Code (commonly known as the
19 “Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sus-
20 tainability and Equity (RAISE) grant pro-
21 gram”).

22 (D) The program for national infrastruc-
23 ture investments (commonly known as the “Re-
24 building American Infrastructure with Sustain-
25 ability and Equity (RAISE) grant program”
26 and formerly known as the “Better Utilizing

1 Investments to Leverage Development
2 (BUILD) grant program”).

3 (2) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
4 the Secretary of Transportation.

5 (b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this section are—

6 (1) to expedite the environmental review process
7 at Federal agencies and for the general public; and

8 (2) to facilitate interactive public stakeholder
9 engagement and understanding of environmental im-
10 pacts of projects under the Federal-aid highway sys-
11 tem.

12 (c) ENCOURAGED USE OF DIGITAL PLATFORMS AND
13 DIGITAL TWINS.—

14 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall encour-
15 age recipients of Federal funds from the Secretary
16 to utilize interactive, digital, cloud-based platforms
17 and high fidelity, 3-dimensional digital models of in-
18 frastructure project elements, such as digital twins,
19 when carrying out environmental reviews under the
20 National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42
21 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) by publishing the guidance de-
22 scribed in paragraph (2).

23 (2) GUIDANCE.—Not later than 90 days after
24 the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary
25 shall publish technology-neutral best practice guid-

1 ance to encourage sponsors of projects that receive
2 Federal funds from the Secretary to use an inter-
3 active, digital, cloud-based platform and high fidel-
4 ity, 3-dimensional digital models of infrastructure
5 project elements, such as digital twins, in carrying
6 out the environmental impact analysis and commu-
7 nity engagement processes required under the Na-
8 tional Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C.
9 4321 et seq.).

10 (d) USE OF DIGITAL PLATFORMS AND DIGITAL
11 TWINS IN COVERED PROJECTS.—

12 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall select
13 not less than 10 covered projects to demonstrate the
14 use of interactive, digital, cloud-based platforms and
15 high fidelity, 3-dimensional digital models of infra-
16 structure project elements, such as digital twins, in
17 carrying out the environmental impact analysis and
18 community engagement processes required under
19 that Act, which may include projects in States par-
20 ticipating in the surface transportation project deliv-
21 ery program under section 327 of title 23, United
22 States Code.

23 (2) ADDITIONAL PROJECTS.—In addition to the
24 covered projects selected by the Secretary under
25 paragraph (1), the Secretary shall include additional

1 projects that utilize interactive, digital, cloud-based
2 platforms and high fidelity, 3-dimensional digital
3 models of infrastructure project elements, such as
4 digital twins, in the report under subsection (e), on
5 request of the sponsors of those projects.

6 (3) PRIORITY.—Notwithstanding any other pro-
7 vision of law, in selecting covered projects under a
8 program described in subparagraphs (A) through
9 (D) of subsection (a)(1), the Secretary shall give pri-
10 ority to applications for projects that demonstrate a
11 plan to implement an interactive, cloud-based plat-
12 form and high fidelity, 3-dimensional digital models
13 of infrastructure project elements, such as digital
14 twins, to carry out the environmental impact anal-
15 ysis and community engagement processes required
16 under the National Environmental Policy Act of
17 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.).

18 (e) REPORTS.—

19 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days
20 after the date of enactment of this Act, the Sec-
21 retary shall submit to the Committee on Environ-
22 ment and Public Works of the Senate and the Com-
23 mittee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the
24 House of Representatives a report on the efficacy of
25 using interactive, cloud-based platforms and high fi-

1 delity, 3-dimensional digital models of infrastructure
2 project elements, such as digital twins, in carrying
3 out environmental impact analysis and community
4 engagement requirements under the National Envi-
5 ronmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et
6 seq.), including—

7 (A) metrics that describe estimates of
8 achieved efficiencies, community engagement
9 measures, and efficiencies enjoyed across Fed-
10 eral agencies; and

11 (B) examples of digital workflows enabled.

12 (2) PUBLICATION OF EXAMPLES.—Not later
13 than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act,
14 the Secretary shall publish on the website of the De-
15 partment of Transportation, and submit to the Com-
16 mittee on Environment and Public Works of the
17 Senate and the Committee on Transportation and
18 Infrastructure of the House of Representatives, not
19 less than 5 examples of an environmental impact
20 statement, environmental assessment, or categorical
21 exclusion document developed using an interactive,
22 digital, cloud-based platform and high fidelity, 3-di-
23 mensional digital models of infrastructure project
24 elements, such as digital twins.

1 (f) SAVINGS PROVISION.—Nothing in this section af-
2 fects or interferes with the authorities or responsibilities
3 assumed by a State under section 327 of title 23, United
4 States Code.