To amend the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965 to provide for a high-speed broadband deployment initiative.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. GRAVES of Missouri (for himself and Mr. KATKO) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on

A BILL

To amend the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965 to provide for a high-speed broadband deployment initiative.

1 Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

3 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Eliminating Barriers to Rural Internet Development Grant Eligibility Act” or the “E-BRIDGE Act”.
SEC. 2. HIGH-SPEED BROADBAND DEPLOYMENT INITIATIVE.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Title II of the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3141 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“SEC. 219. HIGH-SPEED BROADBAND DEPLOYMENT INITIATIVE.

“(a) DEFINITIONS.—

“(1) BROADBAND PROJECT.—The term ‘broadband project’ means—

“(A) planning, technical assistance, or training;

“(B) the acquisition or development of land; or

“(C) the acquisition, design and engineering, construction, rehabilitation, alteration, expansion, or improvement of facilities, including related machinery, equipment, contractual rights, and intangible property, for the purpose of providing, extending, expanding, or improving high-speed broadband service to further the goals of this Act.

“(2) HIGH-SPEED BROADBAND.—The term ‘high-speed broadband’ means the provision of two-way data transmission with sufficient downstream and upstream speeds to end users to permit effective
participation in the economy and to support economic growth, as determined by the Secretary.

“(b) BROADBAND PROJECTS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—On the application of an eligible recipient, the Secretary may make grants under this title for broadband projects. Any such grant shall be subject to the provisions of this section.

“(2) ELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS FOR BROADBAND PROJECTS.—

“(A) DEFINITION.—In the case of grants for broadband projects, the term ‘eligible recipient’ includes, in addition to the eligible recipients identified in section 3—

“(i) a public-private partnership; and

“(ii) a consortium formed for the purpose of providing, extending, expanding, or improving high-speed broadband service between one or more eligible recipients, as defined in section 3, and one or more for-profit organizations.

“(B) INTEREST IN REAL OR PERSONAL PROPERTY.—For any broadband project of a public-private partnership or consortium, the Secretary shall require that title to any real or
personal property acquired or improved with
grant funds, or if the recipient will not acquire
title another possessory interest acceptable to
the Secretary, be vested in a public partner or
eligible nonprofit organization or association for
the useful life of the project, after which title
may be transferred to any member of the pub-
lic-private partnership or consortium in accord-
ance with regulations promulgated by the Sec-
retary.

“(3) PROCUREMENT.—Notwithstanding any
other provision of law, no person or entity shall be
disqualified from competing to provide goods or serv-
ices related to a broadband project on the basis that
the person or entity participated in the development
of the broadband project or in the drafting of speci-
fications, requirements, statements of work, or simi-
lar documents related to the goods or services to be
provided.

“(4) BROADBAND PROJECT PROPERTY.—The
Secretary may permit a recipient of a grant for a
broadband project to grant an option to acquire real
or personal property (including contractual rights
and intangible property) related to that project to a
third party on such terms as the Secretary deter-
mines to be appropriate, provided that such option may only be exercised after the Secretary releases the federal interest in the property. The grant or exercise of any such option shall not constitute a redistribution of grant funds within the meaning of section 217 of this title.

“(c) Sources of Assistance.—A grant provided under this section may be provided from amounts made available to carry out this title in combination with amounts made available under any other Federal program.

“(d) Non-Federal Share.—In determining the amount of the non-Federal share of the cost of a broadband project, the Secretary may provide credit toward the non-Federal share for the present value of allowable contributions over the useful life of the broadband project, provided that the Secretary may require such assurances of the value of the rights and of the commitment of the rights as the Secretary determines to be appropriate.”.

(b) Clerical Amendment.—The table of contents in section 1(b) of such Act is amended by inserting after the item relating to section 218 the following new item:

“Sec. 219. High-speed broadband deployment initiative.”.