H. R. ______

To establish an additional fund in the Treasury to reimburse broadcast television stations for costs associated with channel relocation resulting from the reorganization of broadcast television spectrum, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on

A BILL

To establish an additional fund in the Treasury to reimburse broadcast television stations for costs associated with channel relocation resulting from the reorganization of broadcast television spectrum, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-

tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Viewer Protection Act of 2016”.

January 5, 2016 (9:07 a.m.)
SEC. 2. CONSUMER OUTREACH CAMPAIGN.

There is authorized to be appropriated to the Federal Communications Commission $90,000,000 to conduct a consumer outreach campaign to raise awareness of changes to the television channels available to such consumers as a result of the reorganization of broadcast television spectrum carried out pursuant to section 6403(b) of the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 (47 U.S.C. 1452(b)).

SEC. 3. VIEWER PROTECTION FUND.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is established in the Treasury of the United States a fund to be known as the Viewer Protection Fund.

(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated $1,000,000,000 to the Viewer Protection Fund.

(c) RESERVE SOURCE FOR PAYMENT OF RELOCATION COSTS.—

(1) AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS.—If funds available in the TV Broadcaster Relocation Fund established under section 6403(d) of the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 (47 U.S.C. 1452(d)) are exhausted and the Federal Communications Commission makes the certification described in paragraph (2), amounts in the Viewer Protection Fund shall be available to the Commis-
sion to make payments required by section 6403(b)(4)(A)(i) of such Act.

(2) CERTIFICATION.—In order for amounts in the Viewer Protection Fund to be available to the Federal Communications Commission, the Commission shall certify to the Secretary of the Treasury that such amounts are necessary to provide reimbursements for relocation costs to one or more broadcast television licensees to prevent a substantial number of consumers from losing access to broadcast television signals due to the reorganization of broadcast television spectrum carried out pursuant to section 6403(b) of such Act.

(d) LIMITATION.—Funds made available to the Commission under this section shall only be available until the end of fiscal year 2022.

(e) UNUSED FUNDS RETURNED TO THE GENERAL FUND OF THE TREASURY.—If any amounts remain in the Viewer Protection Fund after the end of fiscal year 2022, the Secretary of the Treasury shall transfer such amounts to the general fund of the Treasury.

SEC. 4. ANALYSIS OF REORGANIZATION PLAN AND TRANSITION PERIOD.

(a) ANALYSIS.—Not later than 5 months after the conclusion of competitive bidding in the forward auction
authorized under section 6403(c) of the Middle Class Tax
Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 (47 U.S.C. 1452(c)),
the Federal Communications Commission, or the Media
Bureau of the Commission under delegated authority,
shall publish an analysis on how the Commission will com-
plete an expedited reorganization within the 39-month
transition period.

(b) Transition Period.—

(1) Relocation Plan.—The Federal Commu-
nications Commission shall, by order, delegate to the
Media Bureau of the Commission the authority to
adopt a broadcast channel relocation plan with relo-
cation deadlines designed to ensure that wireless li-
censees obtain access to their licenses expeditiously
while broadcast channel relocation efforts are com-
pleted as efficiently and effectively as possible. Such
plan should seek to provide wireless licensees with
access to their licenses on a phased-in basis as separ-
ate regions of the country are reorganized for wire-
less use.

(2) Transition Period.—Not later than
[______], the Federal Communications Commission
shall, by order, delegate to the Media Bureau of the
Commission the authority to—
(A) modify the transition period for relocation of specific broadcast television stations in accordance with the reassignments of television channels made under section 6403(b) of the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 (47 U.S.C. 1452(b)), as the Bureau determines necessary to ensure that—

(i) no station is forced to stop broadcasting due to reasons outside the station’s control; and

(ii) the plan adopted pursuant to paragraph (1) proceeds as efficiently and effectively as possible; and

(B) impose appropriate penalties should a station fail or refuse to meet the deadlines adopted in the plan other than for reasons outside the station’s control.