

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 5359

To establish the Rural Export Center, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 24, 2021

Mr. ARMSTRONG (for himself and Mr. PAPPAS) introduced the following bill;
which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

A BILL

To establish the Rural Export Center, 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 “Promoting Rural Ex-
5 ports Act of 2021”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

8 (1) Rural businesses are often located far from
9 information clusters and major transportation cor-
10 ridors.

1 (2) Because of their location, rural businesses
2 face higher barriers to accessing international mar-
3 kets.

4 (3) A dedicated Rural Export Center within the
5 United States and Foreign Commercial Service pro-
6 viding business- and product-specific support can
7 help companies in the United States looking to ex-
8 port their products.

9 **SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE RURAL EXPORT CENTER.**

10 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

11 (1) ASSISTANT SECRETARY.—The term “Assist-
12 ant Secretary” means the Assistant Secretary of
13 Commerce and Director General of the United
14 States and Foreign Commercial Service appointed
15 pursuant to section 2301(a)(2) of the Export En-
16 hancement Act of 1988 (15 U.S.C. 4721(a)(2)).

17 (2) COMMERCIAL SERVICE.—The term “Com-
18 mercial Service” means the United States and For-
19 eign Commercial Service established under section
20 2301(a)(1) of the Export Enhancement Act of 1988
21 (15 U.S.C. 4721(a)(1)).

22 (b) ESTABLISHMENT OF THE RURAL EXPORT CEN-
23 TER.—

24 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after
25 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Assistant

1 Secretary shall establish a Rural Export Center (in
2 this section referred to as the “Center”) for the pur-
3 pose of providing businesses located in rural areas in
4 the United States with resources to help those busi-
5 nesses export their products.

6 (2) LOCATION OF THE CENTER.—

7 (A) IN GENERAL.—The Center shall be es-
8 tablished at an office of the Commercial Service
9 in the United States in existence before the
10 date of the enactment of this Act.

11 (B) CRITERIA FOR SELECTING LOCA-
12 TION.—In selecting a location for the Center,
13 the Assistant Secretary shall give preference—

14 (i) based on expertise and operations
15 at Commercial Service offices that support
16 rural businesses exporting to new markets
17 before the date of the enactment of this
18 Act; and

19 (ii) to such offices not located in
20 major metropolitan areas.

21 (C) LOCATION OF STAFF.—Any researcher
22 or staff directly supporting the operation of the
23 Center shall be primarily based at the Center.

24 (c) EXPORT CENTER OPERATIONS.—

25 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Center shall—

1 (A) provide in-depth, customized, and ac-
2 tionable market research services that—

3 (i) a business may opt into based on
4 need; and

5 (ii) are—

6 (I) focused on actionable and
7 measurable results for a business;

8 (II) business- and product-spe-
9 cific;

10 (III) targeted to not more than 3
11 international markets;

12 (IV) based on high-quality data,
13 including data from international
14 trade association subscription data-
15 bases; and

16 (V) based on market analysis and
17 export services of the Commercial
18 Service available before the date of
19 the enactment of this Act, including
20 the Rural America's Intelligence Serv-
21 ice for Exporters program; and

22 (B) conduct strategic planning and export
23 support services for rural businesses as needed.

1 (2) MEASURE OF EFFECTIVENESS.—To meas-
2 ure the effectiveness of the Center, the Center shall
3 collect and make available data on—

4 (A) the number of businesses that sign up
5 for market research assistance;

6 (B) the number of export assistance serv-
7 ices a business engages in following the re-
8 search assistance, including—

9 (i) trade shows;

10 (ii) trade missions; and

11 (iii) other services facilitated by the
12 Center; and

13 (C) the total monetary value of exports fa-
14 cilitated by the services provided by the Center.

15 (3) WEBSITE FOR THE CENTER.—The Center
16 shall maintain an internet website that includes—

17 (A) data collected by the Center;

18 (B) best practices for rural businesses be-
19 ginning to evaluate export opportunities; and

20 (C) appropriate contact information for
21 staff at the Center.

○