



Electrify Africa Act of 2015 (S.2152/H.R.2847)

Problem: Nearly 70 percent or 580 million people in sub-Saharan Africa lack access to electricity. They live without lights, refrigeration, life-saving medical treatments, machines to produce goods, and modern technologies. Africa's lack of electricity is also one of the biggest constraints on economic growth and trade.

Solution: The Electrify Africa Act will assist and encourage countries in sub-Saharan Africa to develop reliable, affordable, and sustainable electricity, and will implement strategies to provide first-time power access to at least 50 million people by 2020. This bill reduces poverty and will help save lives. As a by-product the U.S. job market will grow through increased exports to Africa.

What the Electrify Africa Act does:

- Requires the Administration to establish an Interagency Working Group to coordinate and create a comprehensive strategy to achieve energy goals in sub-Saharan African countries using a broad mix of power solutions to increase electricity access and reliability.
- Encourages the installation of at least 20,000 megawatts of electrical power in rural and urban areas.
- Encourages key institutions such as the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), USAID, the U.S. Department of Treasury, World Bank, U.S. Trade and Development Agency, and African Development Bank to prioritize loans, grants, and technical support that promote private investment in projects designed to increase electricity access and reliability.
- Strengthens OPIC by extending its authorization for three years, requiring the publication of its investments and their measurable development impacts, creating an Inspector General and other important institutional reforms.
- Requires a report be submitted to Congress on the effectiveness of efforts to promote investment in energy and infrastructure projects.

Cost/Savings:

- The bill ensures that the U.S. government has a clear strategy in place at no additional cost to the U.S. taxpayer. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) projected the 113th Congressional version of the Electrify Africa Act would save U.S. taxpayers \$86 million over a five-year period.

Other Noteworthy Facts:

- The bipartisan Electrify Africa Act was originally introduced last year in the House of Representatives and accumulated 117 co-sponsors. The original bill was passed in May 2014 by a vote of 297 to 117, but didn't make it through the Senate in time.
- The bill was reintroduced this year with minimal changes in both Houses by Reps Royce (R-CA) and Engel (D-NY) and Senators Corker (R-TN) and Cardin (D-MD), the Chairman and Ranking Members of the House and Senate Foreign Relations Committees.
- According to the World Health Organization, three of the four countries hardest hit in the recent Ebola outbreak are among the top ten countries for worst access to electricity.
- Over four million people die every year from the health impacts of indoor air pollution caused by a lack of electricity. Women and children are the most vulnerable.
- On game days, the Dallas Cowboys stadium uses more electricity in one day than the entire country of Liberia, a nation of 3.7 million people.