To direct the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information to submit to Congress a report containing an assessment of the value, cost, and feasibility of developing a trans-Atlantic submarine fiber optic cable connecting the contiguous United States, the United States Virgin Islands, Ghana, and Nigeria, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 16, 2023

Ms. PLASKETT introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Energy and Commerce

A BILL

To direct the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information to submit to Congress a report containing an assessment of the value, cost, and feasibility of developing a trans-Atlantic submarine fiber optic cable connecting the contiguous United States, the United States Virgin Islands, Ghana, and Nigeria, and for other purposes.

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

2 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

3 This Act may be cited as the “DiasporaLink Act”.

4
SEC. 2. ASSESSMENT OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRANS-ATLANTIC SUBMARINE FIBER OPTIC CABLE.

(a) Report.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Assistant Secretary, in consultation with the heads of other Federal departments and agencies as necessary, shall submit to the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report containing an assessment of the value, cost, and feasibility of developing a trans-Atlantic submarine fiber optic cable connecting the contiguous United States, the United States Virgin Islands, Ghana, and Nigeria.

(b) Elements.—The report required by subsection (a) shall include—

(1) the digital security, national security, and economic opportunities associated with a trans-Atlantic submarine fiber optic cable described in subsection (a);

(2) the lifespan of submarine fiber optic cables currently connecting the United States Virgin Islands to the contiguous United States;

(3) the current security of telecommunications between the contiguous United States and the United States Virgin Islands;
(4) the current reliability and security of telecommunications infrastructure in the United States Virgin Islands;

(5) the potential for engagement with trusted entities in the development by the United States of a trans-Atlantic submarine fiber optic cable described in subsection (a), and the associated geopolitical and economic advantages;

(6) the potential digital sovereignty opportunities of a trans-Atlantic submarine fiber optic cable described in subsection (a);

(7) the value, cost, and feasibility of establishing a data center and high-security cloud services facility, with independent power generation, in the United States Virgin Islands for military and national security communications; and

(8) any other related matters the Assistant Secretary determines are appropriate.

(c) FORM.—The report required by subsection (a) shall be submitted in unclassified form without any declassification relating to dissemination control, but may include a classified annex.

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:
(1) ASSISTANT SECRETARY.—The term “Assistant Secretary” means the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information.

(2) NOT TRUSTED.—The term “not trusted” means, with respect to an entity, that the entity is determined by the Assistant Secretary to pose an unacceptable risk to the national security of the United States, or the security and safety of United States persons, based solely on one or more determination described under paragraphs (1) through (4) of section 2(c) of the Secure and Trusted Communications Networks Act of 2019 (47 U.S.C. 1601(c)).

(3) TRUSTED.—The term “trusted” means, with respect to an entity, that the Assistant Secretary has not determined that the entity is not trusted.