

The Smart Cities and Communities Act

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Reps. Suzan DelBene (WA-01) and Yvette Clarke (NY-09) introduced the Smart Cities and Communities Act on May 20, 2021 to promote the use of smart city technologies and enhance federal coordination of these programs.

What are Smart Cities?

Updating the nation's physical infrastructure in communities across the country presents an opportunity to incorporate new sensing technologies and data analytics for smarter transportation, water, and energy infrastructure, making better use of limited municipal budgets and providing better services.

Smart cities and communities are the next iteration of an increasingly digitally connected society. Intelligent devices, sensors, and software give our existing infrastructure the equivalent of digital eyes and ears. These smart devices support more efficient and effective control and monitoring of core government functions, including our energy and water systems, transportation networks, human services, and public safety operations.

How Does Smart Tech Help Cities?

City governments around the world are expected to spend \$41 trillion over the next 20 years on smart tech to upgrade their infrastructure to benefit from these technologies. While many cities are proactively pursuing this model, the U.S. is lagging the world in smart city development even though every dollar invested in government tech saves nearly \$4.



What Does this Bill Do?

The Smart Cities and Communities Act was developed in collaboration with cities and technology innovators. It authorizes \$1.1 billion over 5 years. The legislation would:

- Enhance federal coordination of smart city programs, including improved reporting and demonstration of the value and utility of smart city systems.
- Provide assistance and resources to local governments interested in implementing smart city technologies, making them more accessible in suburban and rural areas.
- Develop a skilled and technologically equip domestic workforce to support smart cities.
- Improve the quality and performance of smart city technologies while assessing and enhancing cybersecurity and privacy protections.
- Foster international collaboration and trade in smart city technologies.

Smart Cities in Practice



The City of Spokane in Washington state is partnering with Itron and Washington State University among others to install smart streetlights equipped with air quality sensors to save in energy costs while improving both the safety and the health of urban residents.

The City of Seattle is partnering with the University of Washington and Argonne National Laboratory to deploy an array of sensors across the city to improve hyper-local weather forecasting and reduce flash flooding.



To combat gun violence, the city of Boston installed a sensor-based gunfire detection system that can alert officers to precise crime scenes within seconds.

In California, Los Angeles traffic planners analyzed data on pedestrian and cyclist fatalities to pinpoint the most dangerous intersections and then added bike lanes and posted officers there during rush hour.



Santa Fe has developed an innovative smart water system that uses cellular connections for real-time water data to reduce water use and plan for shortages.