

Cosponsor the OPEN Government Data Act, H.R. 1770

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Dear Colleague,

Before they decide whether to grab an umbrella in the morning, millions of Americans check their phones. What they might not know is the weather data powering that app comes from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Agency (NOAA). This is one small example of what can happen when government data is opened up to the public. We can power a new wave of innovation by embracing open government data.

Giving researchers, government agencies, and the private sector access to new data from across the federal government, we could see big breakthroughs that fuel the growth of entire new ventures and industries. Plus, we can help people, create jobs, and even save taxpayer money. Consider the VA. It is clear that more needs to be done to prevent fraud and abuse that pervade the system and led to long wait times and scheduling manipulations. Harnessing the power of open data while protecting personal records would make it easier to make the VA scheduling system more efficient and reduce appointment wait times.

Better use of government data can also help the public be stronger consumers and gives the government a chance to save taxpayer money. That's why we are encouraging you to join our effort to codify the federal government's Open Data Policy.

Our Open, Public, Electronic, and Necessary Government Data Act (OPEN Government Data Act), H.R. 1770, is bipartisan, bicameral legislation to open up government data to improve services and support new discoveries in the private sector. The OPEN Government Data Act would require that public data be accessible at Data.gov so individuals, organizations and other government offices can utilize it.

The OPEN Government Data Act would require, by default, the data included at Data.gov to be machine-readable format to make it accessible to anyone and easily searchable. It would require federal agencies to use data to improve decision making. The bill also protects privacy and national security information when making federal government data available to the public.

We re-introduced the OPEN Government Data Act to empower government to be more effective, the private sector to innovate, and citizens to participate. The Senate in the 114th Congress passed a similar version of the bill and the and the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee recently highlighted it during a hearing this past March. Should you be interested in cosponsoring the OPEN Government Data Act or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Aaron Wasserman (Aaron.Wasserman@mail.house.gov) with Rep. Kilmer or Alyssa Wootton (Alyssa.Wootton@mail.house.gov) with Rep. Farenthold.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

/S/
Derek Kilmer
US Representative

/S/
Blake Farenthold
US Representative