AMENDMENT TO
RULES COMMITTEE PRINT 117–31
OFFERED BY MS. SHERRILL OF NEW JERSEY

At the end of title III of division C, add the following:

SEC. 20303. IMPROVING THE NATURAL GAS DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM.

(a) Program.—The Secretary of Energy shall establish a grant program to provide financial assistance to States to offset the incremental rate increases paid by low-income households resulting from the implementation of infrastructure replacement, repair, and maintenance programs that are approved by the rate-setting entity and designed to accelerate the necessary replacement, repair, or maintenance of natural gas distribution systems.

(b) Date of Eligibility.—Awards may be provided under this section to offset rate increases described in subsection (a) occurring on or after the date of enactment of this Act.

(e) Prioritization.—The Secretary shall collaborate with States to prioritize the distribution of grants made under this section. At a minimum, the Secretary
shall consider prioritizing the distribution of grants to States which have—

(1) authorized or adopted enhanced infrastructure replacement programs or innovative rate recovery mechanisms, such as infrastructure cost trackers and riders, infrastructure base rate surcharges, deferred regulatory asset programs, and earnings stability mechanisms; and

(2) a viable means for delivering financial assistance to low-income households.

(d) AUDITING AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.—The Secretary shall establish auditing and reporting requirements for States with respect to the performance of eligible projects funded pursuant to grants awarded under this section.

(e) PREVAILING WAGES.—All laborers and mechanics employed by contractors or subcontractors in the performance of construction, alteration, or repair work assisted, in whole or in part, by a grant under this section shall be paid wages at rates not less than those prevailing on similar construction in the locality as determined by the Secretary of Labor in accordance with subchapter IV of chapter 31 of title 40. With respect to the labor standards in this subsection, the Secretary of Labor shall have the authority and functions set forth in Reorganization Plan

(f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) INNOVATIVE RATE RECOVERY MECHANISMS.—The term “innovative rate recovery mechanisms” means rate structures that allow State public utility commissions to modify tariffs and recover costs of investments in utility replacement incurred between rate cases.

(2) LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLD.—The term “low-income household” means a household that is eligible to receive payments under section 2605(b)(2) of the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Act of 1981 (42 U.S.C. 8624(b)(2)).

(g) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary to carry out this section $250,000,000 in each of fiscal years 2022 through 2031.