

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 4358

AN ACT

To direct the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to submit to Congress a report on preliminary damage assessment and to establish damage assessment teams in the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Preliminary Damage
3 Assessment Improvement Act of 2020”.

4 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

5 Congress finds the following:

6 (1) Preliminary damage assessments play a
7 critical role in assessing and validating the impact
8 and magnitude of a disaster.

9 (2) Through the preliminary damage assess-
10 ment process, representatives from the Federal
11 Emergency Management Agency validate informa-
12 tion gathered by State and local officials that serves
13 as the basis for disaster assistance requests.

14 (3) Various factors can impact the duration of
15 a preliminary damage assessment and the cor-
16 responding submission of a major disaster request,
17 however, the average time between when a disaster
18 occurs, and the submission of a corresponding dis-
19 aster request has been found to be approximately
20 twenty days longer for flooding disasters.

21 (4) With communities across the country facing
22 increased instances of catastrophic flooding and
23 other extreme weather events, accurate and efficient
24 preliminary damage assessments have become criti-
25 cally important to the relief process for impacted
26 states and municipalities.

1 **SEC. 3. REPORT TO CONGRESS.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the
3 date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the
4 Federal Emergency Management Agency shall submit to
5 Congress a report describing the preliminary damage as-
6 sessment process, as supported by the Federal Emergency
7 Management Agency in the 5 years before the date of en-
8 actment of this Act.

9 (b) CONTENTS.—The report described in subsection
10 (a) shall contain the following:

11 (1) The process of the Federal Emergency
12 Management Agency for deploying personnel to sup-
13 port preliminary damage assessments.

14 (2) The number of Agency staff participating
15 on disaster assessment teams.

16 (3) The training and experience of such staff
17 described in paragraph (2).

18 (4) A calculation of the average amount of time
19 disaster assessment teams described in paragraph
20 (1) are deployed to a disaster area.

21 (5) The efforts of the Agency to maintain a
22 consistent liaison between the Agency and State,
23 local, Tribal, and territorial officials within a dis-
24 aster area.

1 **SEC. 4. PRELIMINARY DAMAGE ASSESSMENT.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the
3 date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the
4 Federal Emergency Management Agency shall establish a
5 training regime under section 206.33(b) of title 44, Code
6 of Federal Regulations, within the Federal Emergency
7 Management Agency to ensure preliminary damage as-
8 sessments are conducted and reviewed under consistent
9 guidelines.

10 (b) ANNUAL REPORT.—The Administrator shall an-
11 nually submit to Congress a report on the number and
12 type of instances under which Federal Emergency Man-
13 agement Agency personnel have overturned decisions
14 made by personnel in the field.

15 (c) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 2 years
16 after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator
17 shall submit to Congress a report—

18 (1) describing the establishment of disaster
19 guidelines from Federal Emergency Management
20 Agency personnel described under subsection (a);

21 (2) assessing whether the duration of the de-
22 ployment of Federal Emergency Management Agen-
23 cy personnel to conduct a preliminary damage as-
24 sessment is longer based on specific disaster condi-
25 tions; and

1 (3) containing legislative recommendations to
2 improve the operation, deployment, and staffing of
3 disaster personnel.

4 (d) DEFINITION OF STATE AND LOCAL GOVERN-
5 MENT.—For purposes of this Act, the terms “State” and
6 “local government” have the meanings given such terms
7 in section 102 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief
8 and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5122).

 Passed the House of Representatives November 17,
2020.

Attest:

Clerk.

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