

Union Calendar No. 473

116TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. R. 4358

[Report No. 116-575]

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.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 17, 2019

Mr. KATKO (for himself and Mr. CUNNINGHAM) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

NOVEMBER 16, 2020

Additional sponsors: Mr. RICE of South Carolina, Mr. SABLAN, and Mr. DELGADO

NOVEMBER 16, 2020

Reported with an amendment; committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

[Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in italic]

[For text of introduced bill, see copy of bill as introduced on September 17, 2019]

A BILL

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,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 *This Act may be cited as the “Preliminary Damage*
5 *Assessment Improvement Act of 2020”.*

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 *Congress finds the following:*

8 *(1) Preliminary damage assessments play a crit-*
9 *ical role in assessing and validating the impact and*
10 *magnitude of a disaster.*

11 *(2) Through the preliminary damage assessment*
12 *process, representatives from the Federal Emergency*
13 *Management Agency validate information gathered by*
14 *State and local officials that serves as the basis for*
15 *disaster assistance requests.*

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

23 *(4) With communities across the country facing*
24 *increased instances of catastrophic flooding and other*
25 *extreme weather events, accurate and efficient pre-*

1 *liminary damage assessments have become critically*
2 *important to the relief process for impacted states and*
3 *municipalities.*

4 **SEC. 3. REPORT TO CONGRESS.**

5 (a) *IN GENERAL.*—Not later than 90 days after the
6 *date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Fed-*
7 *eral Emergency Management Agency shall submit to Con-*
8 *gress a report describing the preliminary damage assess-*
9 *ment process, as supported by the Federal Emergency Man-*
10 *agement Agency in the 5 years before the date of enactment*
11 *of this Act.*

12 (b) *CONTENTS.*—The report described in subsection (a)
13 *shall contain the following:*

14 (1) *The process of the Federal Emergency Man-*
15 *agement Agency for deploying personnel to support*
16 *preliminary damage assessments.*

17 (2) *The number of Agency staff participating on*
18 *disaster assessment teams.*

19 (3) *The training and experience of such staff de-*
20 *scribed in paragraph (2).*

21 (4) *A calculation of the average amount of time*
22 *disaster assessment teams described in paragraph (1)*
23 *are deployed to a disaster area.*

24 (5) *The efforts of the Agency to maintain a con-*
25 *sistent liaison between the Agency and State, local,*

1 *Tribal, and territorial officials within a disaster*
2 *area.*

3 **SEC. 4. PRELIMINARY DAMAGE ASSESSMENT.**

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

11 *(b) ANNUAL REPORT.—The Administrator shall annu-*
12 *ally submit to Congress a report on the number and type*
13 *of instances under which Federal Emergency Management*
14 *Agency personnel have overturned decisions made by per-*
15 *sonnel in the field.*

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

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

22 *(2) assessing whether the duration of the deploy-*
23 *ment of Federal Emergency Management Agency per-*
24 *sonnel to conduct a preliminary damage assessment is*
25 *longer based on specific disaster conditions; 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 in*
7 *section 102 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and*
8 *Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5122).*

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