

FEDERAL DISASTER ASSISTANCE COORDINATION ACT

JULY 11, 2019.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. DEFAZIO, from the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, submitted the following

R E P O R T

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 1306) to amend the Disaster Recovery Reform Act to develop a study regarding streamlining and consolidating information collection and preliminary damage assessments, and for other purposes, having considered the same, report favorably thereon without amendment and recommend that the bill do pass.

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PURPOSE OF LEGISLATION

The purpose of H.R. 1306, the Federal Disaster Assistance Coordination Act, is to develop a study on streamlining and consoli-

dating Federal information collection and preliminary damage assessments.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

Multiple federal agencies participate in information collection and damage assessments to grant Federal funding requested following emergencies and disasters, including the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the Small Business Administration (SBA). These tasks often need to be completed by more than one department or agency before an eligible applicant can receive Federal assistance. This leads to slow turnaround times in assisting disaster survivors and impacted communities, and a backlog of applications for assistance following major disasters.

Section 1223 of the Disaster Recovery Reform Act of 2018 broadly requires “an inter-agency study to streamline information collection from disaster assistance applicants and grantees, and the establishment of a public website to present the data.” The Act provides no timeline for when the study should occur or which Federal departments and agencies should be involved.

H.R. 1306 would further the requirements of Section 1223 and address the inefficiencies associated with disaster funding disbursement by requiring a Federal working group to identify areas of potential overlap and to make a recommendation to Congress as to whether a single agency could assume responsibility for information collection and damage assessments. The working group would also examine whether emerging technologies, such as unmanned aircraft systems, could be used to expedite the damage assessment process.

HEARINGS

For the purposes of section 103(i) of H. Res. 6 of the 116th Congress—

The following hearing was used to develop or consider H.R. 1306:

On February 26, 2019, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure held a hearing entitled, “Examining How Federal Infrastructure Policy Could Help Mitigate and Adapt to Climate Change.” Witnesses included: Dr. Daniel Sperling, Board Member, California Air Resources Board; Mr. Ben Prochazka, Vice President, Electrification Coalition; Ms. Vicki Arroyo, Executive Director, Georgetown Climate Center; Mr. James M. Proctor, II, Senior Vice President and General Counsel, McWane, Inc., testifying on behalf of the Build Strong Coalition; Mr. Kevin DeGood, Director, Infrastructure Policy, Center for American Progress; Ms. Lynn Scarlett, Vice President, Policy and Government Affairs, The Nature Conservancy; and Dr. Whitley J. Saumweber, Director, Stephenson Ocean Security (SOS) Project, Center for Strategic and International Studies. Topics discussed included impacts of severe weather events and rising costs of federal response and recovery operations.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY AND CONSIDERATION

H.R. 1306 was introduced in the House on February 15, 2019, by Mr. Meadows and referred to the Committee on Transportation and

Infrastructure. Within the Committee, H.R. 1306 was referred to the Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management.

The Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management was discharged from further consideration of H.R. 1306 on March 27, 2019.

The Full Committee met in open session to consider H.R. 1306 on March 27, 2019, and ordered the measure to be reported to the House with a favorable recommendation, without amendment, by voice vote with a quorum present.

COMMITTEE VOTES

Clause 3(b) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives requires each committee report to include the total number of votes cast for and against on each record vote on a motion to report and on any amendment offered to the measure or matter, and the names of those members voting for and against.

There were no recorded votes taken in connection with consideration of H.R. 1306.

COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT FINDINGS

With respect to the requirements of clause 3(c)(1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee's oversight findings and recommendations are reflected in this report.

NEW BUDGET AUTHORITY AND TAX EXPENDITURES

Clause 3(c)(2) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives does not apply where a cost estimate and comparison prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office under section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 has been timely submitted prior to the filing of the report and is included in the report. Such a cost estimate is included in this report.

CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

With respect to the requirement of clause 3(c)(3) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives and section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the Committee has received the enclosed cost estimate for H.R. 1306 from the Director of the Congressional Budget Office:

U.S. CONGRESS,
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,
Washington, DC, May 15, 2019.

Hon. PETER A. DEFazio,
*Chairman, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The Congressional Budget Office has prepared the enclosed cost estimate for H.R. 1306, the Federal Disaster Assistance Coordination Act.

If you wish further details on this estimate, we will be pleased to provide them. The CBO staff contact is Jon Sperl.

Sincerely,

KEITH HALL,
Director.

Enclosure.

H.R. 1306, Federal Disaster Assistance Coordination Act			
As ordered reported by the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure on March 27, 2019			
By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars	2019	2019-2024	2019-2029
Direct Spending (Outlays)	0	0	0
Revenues	0	0	0
Deficit Effect	0	0	0
Spending Subject to Appropriation (Outlays)	0	*	n.e.
Pay-as-you-go procedures apply?	No	Mandate Effects	
Increases on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2030?	No	Contains intergovernmental mandate?	No
		Contains private-sector mandate?	No
n.e. = not estimated; * = between zero and \$500,000			

H.R. 1306 would extend the deadline for completing certain activities required under the Disaster Recovery Reform Act. The bill also would require the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to convene a working group with other federal agencies to improve preliminary damage assessments following disasters. Specifically, the bill would direct the working group to identify potential areas of duplication, determine the feasibility of having one federal agency make damage assessments for all agencies, and identify new areas for the use of technology. The bill would require the working group to post a report on FEMA's website and brief the Congress on its findings.

Using information from FEMA about the cost of similar reports, CBO estimates that implementing the additional requirements in the bill would cost less than \$500,000 over the 2019–2024 period.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Jon Sperl. The estimate was reviewed by H. Samuel Papenfuss, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.

PERFORMANCE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

With respect to the requirement of clause 3(c)(4) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the performance goal and objective of this legislation is to streamline information collection and damage assessments conducted by Federal departments and agencies in response to applications for disaster assistance.

DUPLICATION OF FEDERAL PROGRAMS

Pursuant to clause 3(c)(5) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee finds that no provision of H.R. 1306 establishes or reauthorizes a program of the federal government known to be duplicative of another federal program, a program that was included in any report from the Government Ac-

countability Office to Congress pursuant to section 21 of Public Law 111–139, or a program related to a program identified in the most recent Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance.

CONGRESSIONAL EARMARKS, LIMITED TAX BENEFITS, AND LIMITED TARIFF BENEFITS

In compliance with clause 9 of rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives, this bill, as reported, contains no congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9(e), 9(f), or 9(g) of the rule XXI.

FEDERAL MANDATES STATEMENT

The Committee adopts as its own the estimate of federal mandates prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office pursuant to section 423 of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (Public Law 104–4).

PREEMPTION CLARIFICATION

Section 423 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974 requires the report of any Committee on a bill or joint resolution to include a statement on the extent to which the bill or joint resolution is intended to preempt state, local, or tribal law. The Committee finds that H.R. 1306 does not preempt any state, local, or tribal law.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE STATEMENT

No advisory committees within the meaning of section 5(b) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act were created by this legislation.

APPLICABILITY TO LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

The Committee finds that the legislation does not relate to the terms and conditions of employment or access to public services or accommodations within the meaning of section 102(b)(3) of the Congressional Accountability Act (Public Law 104–1).

SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS OF THE LEGISLATION

Section 1. Short title

This section provides that this bill may be cited as the “Federal Disaster Assistance Coordination Act”.

Sec. 2. Study to streamline and consolidate information collection and preliminary damage assessments

This section amends Section 1223 of the Disaster Recovery Reform Act of 2018 by adding specific subsections related to information collection and damage assessment. The subsections would require the FEMA Administrator to coordinate with the appropriate agency heads to (1) conduct a study and develop a plan to consolidate federal disaster information collection, and (2) identify areas of overlap and assess whether a single agency could produce damage assessments for all agencies. The section would also require production of a comprehensive, publicly-available report with findings and recommendations for the House Committee on Transpor-

tation and Infrastructure and the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW MADE BY THE BILL, AS REPORTED

In compliance with clause 3(e) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, changes in existing law made by the bill, as reported, are shown as follows (existing law proposed to be omitted is enclosed in black brackets, new matter is printed in italic, and existing law in which no change is proposed is shown in roman):

**SECTION 1223 OF THE DISASTER RECOVERY REFORM
ACT OF 2018**

**[(SEC. 1223. STUDY TO STREAMLINE AND CONSOLIDATE INFORMATION
COLLECTION.**

[(Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator—

[(1) in coordination with the Small Business Administration, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Disaster Assistance Working Group of the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, and other appropriate agencies, conduct a study and develop a plan, consistent with law, under which the collection of information from disaster assistance applicants and grantees will be modified, streamlined, expedited, efficient, flexible, consolidated, and simplified to be less burdensome, duplicative, and time consuming for applicants and grantees;

[(2) in coordination with the Small Business Administration, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Disaster Assistance Working Group of the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, and other appropriate agencies, develop a plan for the regular collection and reporting of information on Federal disaster assistance awarded, including the establishment and maintenance of a website for presenting the information to the public; and

[(3) submit the plans developed under paragraphs (1) and (2) to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate.]

**SEC. 1223. STUDY TO STREAMLINE AND CONSOLIDATE INFORMATION
COLLECTION AND PRELIMINARY DAMAGE ASSESSMENTS.**

(a) INFORMATION COLLECTION.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this section, the Administrator, in coordination with the Small Business Administration, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Disaster Assistance Working Group of the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, and other appropriate agencies, shall—

(1) conduct a study and develop a plan, consistent with law, under which the collection of information from disaster assistance applicants and grantees will be modified, streamlined, expedited, efficient, flexible, consolidated, and simplified to be

less burdensome, duplicative, and time consuming for applicants and grantees; and

(2) develop a plan for the regular collection and reporting of information on Federal disaster assistance awarded, including the establishment and maintenance of a website for presenting the information to the public.

(b) PRELIMINARY DAMAGE ASSESSMENTS.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this section, the Administrator, in consultation with the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, shall convene a working group on a regular basis with the Secretary of Labor, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the Administrator of the Small Business Administration, the Secretary of Transportation, the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development, and other appropriate agencies as the Administrator considers necessary, to—

(1) identify and describe the potential areas of duplication or fragmentation in preliminary damage assessments after disaster declarations;

(2) determine the applicability of having one Federal agency make the assessments for all agencies; and

(3) identify potential emerging technologies, such as Unmanned Aircraft Systems, consistent with the requirements established in Public Law 115–87, to expedite the administration of preliminary damage assessments.

(c) COMPREHENSIVE REPORT.—The Administrator shall submit 1 comprehensive report that comprises the plans developed under subsections (a)(1) and (a)(2) and a report of the findings of the working group convened under subsection (b), which may include recommendations, to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate.

(d) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—The comprehensive report developed under subsection (c) shall be made available to the public and posted on the website of the Federal Emergency Management Agency—

(1) in pre-compressed, easily downloadable versions that are made available in all appropriate formats; and

(2) in machine-readable format, if applicable.

(e) SOURCES OF INFORMATION.—In preparing the comprehensive report, any publication, database, or web-based resource, and any information compiled by any government agency, nongovernmental organization, or other entity that is made available may be used.

(f) BRIEFING.—Not later than 180 days after submission of the comprehensive report, the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, or a designee, and a member of the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency, or a designee, shall brief, upon request, the appropriate congressional committees on the findings and any recommendations made in the comprehensive report.