

POST-DISASTER ASSISTANCE ONLINE ACCOUNTABILITY
ACT

JUNE 13, 2022.—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

[To accompany H.R. 2020]

[Including cost estimate of the Congressional Budget Office]

The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, to whom
was referred the bill (H.R. 2020) to provide for an online repository
for certain reporting requirements for recipients of Federal disaster
assistance, and for other purposes, having considered the same, re-
ports favorably thereon without amendment and recommends that
the bill do pass.

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PURPOSE OF LEGISLATION

The purpose of H.R. 2020 is to provide for an online repository for the reporting of certain Federal disaster assistance across federal agencies.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

Multiple Federal departments and agencies—such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Small Business Administration (SBA), Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)—deliver and track disaster assistance. Information regarding federal spending and the progress of agency recovery projects is not currently available to the public in an accessible format. Improving the transparency of data related to the time-sensitive process of disaster recovery is essential to maintaining responsiveness on the part of the federal government and accountability.

The online spending tracker of the federal government—USASpending.gov—publishes the expenditures and disbursements of numerous executive branch programs.¹ Spending and project information related to the majority of federal disaster recovery programs are currently conspicuously absent from this list.

H.R. 2020 would establish a centralized online repository for the submission of details, updates, and expenditures of specific disaster recovery activities by federal agencies. The bill would also make the submitted information publicly available through a subpage on USASpending.gov.

HEARINGS

For the purposes of rule XIII, clause 3(c)(6)(A) of the 117th Congress, the following hearing was used to develop or consider H.R. 2020:

On February 16, 2022, the Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency held a hearing titled “FEMA Priorities for 2022: Stakeholder Perspectives.” The Subcommittee received testimony from Mr. Chris Currie, Director, Homeland Security and Justice, U.S. Government Accountability Office; Ms. Erica Bornemann, Director, Vermont Emergency Management, *on behalf of the National Emergency Management Association*; and Ms. Carolyn Harshman, President, International Association of Emergency Managers.

This hearing allowed Members to receive testimony from witnesses who are emergency management experts and represent key external Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) stakeholders to gauge their perspective regarding what efforts the agency should prioritize in this year.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY AND CONSIDERATION

H.R. 2020, the “*Post-Disaster Assistance Online Accountability Act*”, was introduced in the House on October 20, 2021, by Ms. González-Colón and Ms. Plaskett and referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and in addition to the Committees on Small Business, and Financial Services, for a period to be

¹ See “Learn About USA Spending” Available at: <https://www.usaspending.gov/>.

subsequently determined by the Speaker. Within the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, H.R. 2020 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. 2020 on April 28, 2022.

The Committee considered H.R. 2020 on April 28, 2022 and ordered the measure to be reported to the House with a favorable recommendation, without amendment, by voice vote.

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.

No recorded votes were requested during consideration of H.R. 2020.

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. 2020 from the Director of the Congressional Budget Office:

U.S. CONGRESS,
CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE,
Washington, DC, May 27, 2022.

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. 2020, the Post-Disaster Assistance Online Accountability Act.

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

Sincerely,

PHILLIP L. SWAGEL,
Director.

Enclosure.

H.R. 2020, Post-Disaster Assistance Online Accountability Act			
As ordered reported by the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure on April 28, 2022			
By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars	2022	2022-2027	2022-2032
Direct Spending (Outlays)	0	0	0
Revenues	0	0	0
Increase or Decrease (-) in the Deficit	0	0	0
Spending Subject to Appropriation (Outlays)	0	1	not estimated
Statutory pay-as-you-go procedures apply?	No	Mandate Effects	
Increases on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2033?	No	Contains intergovernmental mandate?	No
		Contains private-sector mandate?	No

H.R. 2020 would require the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), to publish information each quarter on federal disaster assistance payments on the website www.usaspending.gov.

The website is an official source of information on spending by the federal government. CBO expects that OMB and federal agencies would incur some additional administrative costs to prepare and post timely reports on disaster assistance spending. CBO estimates that work would cost less than \$500,000 annually and would total \$1 million over the 2023–2027 period.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Matthew Pickford. The estimate was reviewed by H. Samuel Papenfuss, Deputy 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 provide for an online repository for certain reporting requirements for recipients of Federal 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. 2020 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 Accountability 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. 2020 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 “Post-Disaster Assistance Online Accountability Act”.

Sec. 2. Subpage for Transparency of Disaster Assistance

This section directs the OMB Director to consult with the Secretary of the Treasury and the heads of agencies providing disaster assistance under the *Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act)*, P.L. 93–288, as amended) to establish a subpage on USASpending.gov for the publication of disaster assistance data by agencies providing such assistance. The Section also requires HUD, SBA, and other covered agencies to submit to the subpage: 1) the total amount of disaster assistance provided during a quarter; 2) the amount of disaster assistance provided by the agency that was expended or obligated to projects or activities; and 3) a detailed list of all projects or activities for which disaster assistance dispersed by the agency was expended, obligated, or used within 30 days of the end of a calendar quarter.

Sec. 3. Definitions

This section defines “covered federal agency,” “disaster assistance,” “eligible recipient,” and “specified natural disaster.”

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW MADE BY THE BILL, AS REPORTED

As reported by the Committee, H.R. 2020 makes no changes in existing law.

NYDIA M. VELAZQUEZ, NEW YORK
CHAIRWOMAN

BLAINE LUETKEMEYER, MISSOURI
RANKING MEMBER

COMMITTEE CORRESPONDENCE

Congress of the United States
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Small Business
2501 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-0515

June 10, 2022

The Honorable Peter A. DeFazio
Chairman
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman DeFazio,

I am writing with respect to H.R. 2020, the "Post-Disaster Assistance Online Accountability Act". Thank you for consulting with the Committee on Small Business regarding the matters in H.R. 2020 that fall within the Committee's jurisdiction.

As a result of your consultation with us on this measure and in order to expeditiously move the bill to the floor, I forego further consideration of H.R. 2020. The Committee on Small Business takes this action with our mutual understanding that we do not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained in this or similar legislation, and the Committee will be appropriately consulted and involved as the bill or similar legislation moves forward so that we may address any remaining issues that fall within our jurisdiction. Further, I request your support for the appointment of an appropriate number of conferees from the Committee on Small Business during any House-Senate conference involving this or similar legislation.

Finally, I would appreciate your response to this letter confirming our understanding regarding H.R. 2020 and would ask that a copy of our exchange of letters on this matter be included in the Committee Report and the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the measure. Thank you for the cooperative spirit in which you have worked regarding this matter and others between our respective committees.

Sincerely,



Nydia M. Velázquez
Chairwoman



Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington DC 20515

Peter A. DeFazio
Chair
Katherine W. Dedrick
Staff Director

Sam Graves
Ranking Member
Paul J. Sass
Republican Staff Director

June 10, 2022

The Honorable Nydia M. Velázquez
Chairwoman, Committee on Small Business
U.S. House of Representatives
2361 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Ms. Velázquez:

Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 2020, the *Post-Disaster Assistance Online Accountability Act*. I appreciate your decision to waive formal consideration of the bill.

I agree that the Committee on Small Business has valid jurisdictional claims to certain provisions in this important legislation, and I further agree that by forgoing formal consideration of the bill, the Committee on Small Business is not waiving any jurisdiction over any relevant subject matter. Additionally, if requested I will support the appointment of conferees from the Committee on Small Business should a House-Senate conference be convened on this legislation. Finally, this exchange of letters will be included in the *Congressional Record* when the bill is considered on the floor.

Thank you again, and I look forward to continuing to work collaboratively with the Committee on Small Business on this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter A. DeFazio".

Peter A. DeFazio
Chair

cc: The Honorable Sam Graves
The Honorable Blaine Luetkemeyer
Mr. Jason Smith, Parliamentarian