

**Suspend the Rules and Pass the Bill, H.R. 2914, With an Amendment**

**(The amendment strikes all after the enacting clause and inserts a new text)**

116TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 2914

To make available necessary disaster assistance for families affected by major disasters, and for other purposes.

---

## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 22, 2019

Mr. ESPAILLAT (for himself and Miss GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN of Puerto Rico) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

---

## A BILL

To make available necessary disaster assistance for families affected by major disasters, 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 “Housing Survivors of  
5 Major Disasters Act of 2020”.

6 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

7 In this Act:

1           (1) FEMA.—The term “FEMA” means the  
2           Federal Emergency Management Agency.

3           (2) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term “Adminis-  
4           trator” means the Administrator of FEMA.

5   **SEC. 3. ELIGIBILITY FOR AND USE OF DISASTER ASSIST-**  
6                                   **ANCE.**

7           (a) FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.—Notwithstanding any  
8           other provision of law, individuals and households de-  
9           scribed in subsection (c) may be eligible for assistance  
10          made available under section 408 of the Robert T. Staf-  
11          ford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42  
12          U.S.C. 5174) in connection with a major disaster declared  
13          by the President under section 401 of such Act (42 U.S.C.  
14          5170), including Hurricane Maria of 2017.

15          (b) USE OF FUNDS.—Any assistance provided pursu-  
16          ant to subsection (a) may include costs relating to obtain-  
17          ing title for a property described in subsection (c)(1), in-  
18          cluding the cost of land surveys and any other taxes or  
19          fees associated with obtaining the title for such property.

20          (c) ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS OR HOUSEHOLDS.—With  
21          respect to a major disaster declared by the President  
22          under section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Re-  
23          lief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5170), an  
24          individual or household described in this subsection is an  
25          individual or household who—

1           (1) is residing on a property located in the area  
2           for which the major disaster was declared but does  
3           not have documented ownership rights to such prop-  
4           erty and is not renting such property; or

5           (2) is or was residing in an area for which a  
6           major disaster has been declared by the President  
7           under section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster  
8           Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C.  
9           5170), during the designated incident period, includ-  
10          ing residing in any housing accommodation or prop-  
11          erty upon which a housing accommodation is lo-  
12          cated, including any living quarters, boardinghouse,  
13          bunkhouse, manufactured home, mobile home, or  
14          travel trailer.

15          (d) EVIDENCE.—

16           (1) CONSIDERATION.—In making a determina-  
17           tion to provide assistance pursuant to this Act, the  
18           Administrator shall consider a wide range of evi-  
19           dence.

20           (2) ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF EVIDENCE.—In  
21           determining if an individual or household is eligible  
22           for assistance pursuant to this Act, the Adminis-  
23           trator shall accept either a declarative statement or  
24           the presentation of at least one item of alternative  
25           evidence, including the following:

1 (A) A utility (including gas, electric, sewer,  
2 or water) bill with the name and address of the  
3 individual.

4 (B) A merchant's statement (including a  
5 credit card, delivery notice, or first class mail)  
6 with the name and address of the individual.

7 (C) A pay stub from an employer with the  
8 name and address of the individual.

9 (D) A current driver's license or State-  
10 issued identification card of the individual.

11 (E) The deed or title for the applicable  
12 property.

13 (F) A mortgage payment booklet or an-  
14 other mortgage document.

15 (G) Property title of mobile home certifi-  
16 cate of title.

17 (H) A real estate property tax receipt.

18 (I) A school registration containing the ad-  
19 dress of self, child, or children.

20 (J) A will and testament with the name  
21 and address of the individual.

22 (K) In a State that does not require a will  
23 and testament for the transfer of immovable  
24 property, a death certificate and birth certifi-

1           cate that establishes an automatic transfer of  
2           legal ownership.

3           (L) Medical records that list the name and  
4           address of the individual.

5           (M) A charitable donation receipt that list  
6           the name and address of the individual.

7           (N) Any other documentation, certification,  
8           identification, or proof of occupancy or owner-  
9           ship not included on this list that can reason-  
10          ably link the individual requesting assistance to  
11          the applicable property.

12          (e) APPLICABILITY.—This section shall apply to  
13 funds appropriated on or after the date of enactment of  
14 this Act.

15 **SEC. 4. DECLARATIVE STATEMENT.**

16          (a) DEVELOPMENT OF DECLARATIVE STATEMENT.—

17           (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 30 days after  
18 the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator  
19 shall create, in coordination with the appropriate au-  
20 thorities of the applicable jurisdiction, and dis-  
21 tribute, where necessary, a declarative statement  
22 form that an applicant for assistance provided pur-  
23 suant to section 3 may use to self-certify such appli-  
24 cant's eligibility for assistance pursuant to this Act.

1           (2) PROHIBITION OF NOTARIZATION.—The Ad-  
2           ministrators may not require the declarative state-  
3           ment form created under paragraph (1) to require  
4           notarization by the applicant.

5           (b) EXEMPTIONS.—A declarative statement form cre-  
6           ated under subsection (a)(1) is exempt from publication  
7           notice, public comment periods, and agency information  
8           collection review and approval by the Office of Manage-  
9           ment and Budget required by the Paperwork Reduction  
10          Act (44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.).

11          (c) GUIDANCE.—Not later than 30 days after the  
12          date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall pro-  
13          vide written notification and guidance to employees of  
14          FEMA regarding the requirements of this Act.

15          (d) PUBLICATION.—Not later than 30 days after the  
16          date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall—

17                (1) make the declarative statement form cre-  
18                ated under subsection (a)(1) available in Spanish  
19                and English at all active Disaster Recovery Centers;  
20                and

21                (2) publish in English, Spanish, and any other  
22                locally predominant languages on the website of  
23                FEMA and on social media the declarative state-  
24                ment form and instructions on how applicants can

1 reopen or seek further appeal of relevant determina-  
2 tions.

3 (e) PAST DISASTERS.—For applicants of assistance  
4 provided pursuant to section 3 since January 1, 2017, the  
5 Administrator shall provide an applicant not fewer than  
6 180 days to submit the declarative statement form to re-  
7 open or appeal a case after such applicant has received  
8 notice of the right to do so.

9 **SEC. 5. REPAIR AND REBUILDING.**

10 Section 408(c) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Re-  
11 lief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5174) is  
12 amended—

13 (1) in paragraph (2)(A)(i) by striking “to a  
14 safe and sanitary living or functioning condition”  
15 and inserting “to ensure that such residences are  
16 habitable during longer term recovery (including  
17 through coordination with other sources for repair  
18 and rebuilding of such residences)”; and

19 (2) in paragraph (4) by striking “in cases in  
20 which” and all that follows through the end and in-  
21 serting “if the President determines such assistance  
22 is a cost effective alternative to other housing solu-  
23 tions, including the costs associated with temporary  
24 housing provided under this section.”.

1 **SEC. 6. POST-DISASTER HOUSING ASSISTANCE ANALYSIS**  
2 **AND REPORT.**

3 (a) ANALYSIS.—The Administrator, in coordination  
4 with the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development,  
5 shall conduct an analysis comparing the costs, benefits,  
6 and effectiveness of assistance provided under the Disaster  
7 Housing Assistance Program, including any case manage-  
8 ment services provided, with other temporary housing op-  
9 tions provided by the Administrator under the Robert T.  
10 Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act  
11 (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.).

12 (b) PROVISION OF DATA.—The Secretary shall en-  
13 sure that public housing authorities engaged in carrying  
14 out the Disaster Housing Assistance Program relay data  
15 concerning the extent and effectiveness of case manage-  
16 ment services in transitioning individuals and households  
17 toward self-sufficiency under the Program compared to  
18 other alternative disaster assistance programs available  
19 under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emer-  
20 gency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.).

21 (c) REPORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date  
22 of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall submit  
23 to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure  
24 of the House of Representatives and the Committee on  
25 Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Sen-  
26 ate a report that contains the analysis required under sub-



1 section (a) and an analysis of the oversight mechanisms,  
2 program integrity checks, and financial management  
3 measures utilized in carrying out the Program compared  
4 to alternative disaster housing assistance programs under  
5 the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency As-  
6 sistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.).