

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 4358

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

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 2019”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds the following:

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

4 (2) Through the preliminary damage assess-
5 ment process, representatives from the Federal
6 Emergency Management Agency work with State
7 and local officials to gather information that serves
8 as the basis for disaster assistance requests.

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

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

22 **SEC. 3. REPORT TO CONGRESS.**

23 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the
24 date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the
25 Federal Emergency Management Agency shall submit to

1 Congress a report describing the preliminary damage as-
2 sessment process, as carried out by the Federal Emer-
3 gency Management Agency in the 5 years before the date
4 of enactment of this Act.

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

7 (1) The process of the Federal Emergency
8 Management Agency for deploying disaster assess-
9 ment teams to conduct preliminary damage assess-
10 ments.

11 (2) The number of Agency staff participating
12 on disaster assessment teams.

13 (3) The training and experience of such staff
14 described in paragraph (2).

15 (4) A calculation of the average amount of time
16 disaster assessment teams described in paragraph
17 (1) are deployed to a disaster area.

18 (5) The efforts of the Agency to maintain a
19 consistent liaison between the Agency and commu-
20 nities within a disaster area.

21 **SEC. 4. PRELIMINARY DAMAGE ASSESSMENT.**

22 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the
23 date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the
24 Federal Emergency Management Agency shall establish
25 damage assessment teams under section 206.33(b) of title

1 44, Code of Federal Regulations, within the Federal
2 Emergency Management Agency to conduct preliminary
3 damage assessments with State and local governments and
4 appropriate relief or disaster assistance organizations.

5 (b) DAMAGE ASSESSMENT TEAMS.—Damage assess-
6 ment teams described under subsection (a) shall consist
7 of full-time employees of the Agency with expertise in
8 working with State and local governments and appropriate
9 relief or disaster assistance organizations.

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

13 (1) describing the establishment of disaster as-
14 sessment teams described under subsection (a);

15 (2) assessing whether the duration of the de-
16 ployment of a disaster assessment team to conduct
17 a preliminary damage assessment is longer based on
18 specific disaster conditions;

19 (3) assessing the practicality of forming specific
20 disaster assessment teams for each specific disaster
21 condition; and

22 (4) legislative recommendations to improve the
23 operation, deployment, and staffing of disaster as-
24 sessment teams.

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

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