

115TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3804

To authorize the Secretary of Homeland Security to make grants to encourage community safety by incorporating disaster mitigation and emergency preparedness into comprehensive land use planning and urban development, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 18, 2017

Mr. BLUMENAUER introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Homeland Security, and in addition to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To authorize the Secretary of Homeland Security to make grants to encourage community safety by incorporating disaster mitigation and emergency preparedness into comprehensive land use planning and urban development, 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 “Safe Communities Act
5 of 2017”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 The Congress finds the following:

3 (1) Land use and public facility planning at
4 both the State and local levels have not had ade-
5 quate financial resources to fully incorporate the
6 threats posed both by natural and human-caused
7 disasters, including acts of terrorism. Too frequently
8 this has resulted in costly disaster relief programs
9 and piecemeal, ad hoc security responses, such as
10 unattractive physical barriers that disrupt and ad-
11 versely impact the physical, social, economic, and
12 civic lives in United States communities.

13 (2) Although land use planning is rightfully
14 within the jurisdiction of State and local govern-
15 ments, encouraging community safety by incor-
16 porating disaster mitigation and emergency pre-
17 paredness into comprehensive land use planning and
18 urban development should be supported by the Fed-
19 eral Government and State governments.

20 (3) Disaster response and relief efforts impose
21 significant costs to United States taxpayers. Federal
22 expenditure is heavily weighted to post-disaster re-
23 covery, rather than mitigation. Planning should be
24 undertaken to prevent property damage and human
25 casualties, proactively incorporating mitigation strat-
26 egies and methods from the professional fields of

1 urban, community, and regional planning (including
2 transportation and land use), architecture, landscape
3 architecture, and urban design.

4 (4) Disaster planning has traditionally been bi-
5 ased toward facilitating efficient responses and re-
6 covery, potentially to the detriment of other planning
7 goals. Comprehensive planning can incorporate a
8 range of effective practices for reducing risks posed
9 by natural disasters and terrorist acts. The Federal
10 Government and States should provide a supportive
11 climate and statutory context for comprehensive
12 planning.

13 (5) Many States have land use statutes that do
14 not currently support comprehensive planning for
15 safe communities, and many States are undertaking
16 efforts to update and reform statutes to better en-
17 able planning efforts that incorporate long-term haz-
18 ard mitigation and emergency preparedness.

19 (6) Efforts to coordinate State and regional in-
20 vestments, including at-risk public infrastructure,
21 with local plans require additional State level plan-
22 ning.

23 (7) Comprehensive urban planning takes into
24 account the relationship between land use, transpor-
25 tation systems, water and wastewater facilities, open

1 space, and other critical infrastructure in promoting
2 safe and economically viable communities.

3 (8) Local governments should integrate safety
4 considerations into comprehensive planning efforts.

5 (9) Safe housing is an essential component of
6 safe community development, and comprehensive
7 planning should incorporate modern, scientific plan-
8 ning techniques to ensure that a broad range of safe
9 housing options are available to all members of the
10 Nation's communities.

11 (10) Prevailing land use patterns often place
12 people, structures, and environmental systems at
13 great risk. Poorly regulated rural communities and
14 small towns located on the metropolitan fringe often
15 face significant growth pressures, resulting in hap-
16 hazard development patterns that do not incorporate
17 regional impacts on critical disaster-reduction sys-
18 tems, such as open space and wetlands.

19 (11) The Federal Government and State gov-
20 ernments should support the efforts of Tribal gov-
21 ernments and Native Hawaiian organizations to im-
22 plement land use planning and community develop-
23 ment to improve the safety of housing and socio-
24 economic conditions for Indian Tribes and Native
25 Hawaiians.

1 **SEC. 3. SAFE COMMUNITIES PLANNING GRANTS.**

2 (a) GRANT PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—The Secretary
3 of Homeland Security shall establish a program to provide
4 grants to States and local governments for the purpose
5 of assisting in—

6 (1) the development or revision of land use
7 planning statutes, and State or local comprehensive
8 planning documents, in those States or local govern-
9 ments that either do not have land use planning
10 statutes, or have inadequate or outmoded land use
11 planning statutes and regulations, such that plan-
12 ning efforts have not adequately incorporated strate-
13 gies to mitigate natural and human-caused hazards,
14 including acts of terror, or otherwise hinder coordi-
15 nation of comprehensive planning and emergency
16 preparedness efforts;

17 (2) the creation or revision of State land use
18 planning statutes and local comprehensive land use
19 plans or plan elements in those States or local gov-
20 ernments that have land use planning statutes that
21 incorporate risk-reduction and natural and human-
22 caused hazard mitigation; and

23 (3) the development or revision of comprehen-
24 sive land use plans or plan elements for multi-State
25 regions.

1 (b) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible to receive a grant
2 under subsection (a), a State or local planning director
3 shall submit to the Secretary an application, in such form
4 as the Secretary may require, that demonstrates to the
5 Secretary that the basic goals of the State or local govern-
6 ment regarding land use planning legislation or regulation
7 are consistent with all of the following guidelines:

8 (1) CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT.—Public notifica-
9 tion, citizen representation, and stakeholder involve-
10 ment in a consensus-based, multi-disciplinary plan-
11 ning process are required in developing, adopting,
12 and updating land use plans.

13 (2) MULTI-JURISDICTIONAL COOPERATION.—In
14 order to effectively assess the risks posed to commu-
15 nities by natural hazards and terrorist acts, plan-
16 ning legislation, comprehensive plans, and regula-
17 tions are created based on multi-jurisdictional gov-
18 ernmental cooperation.

19 (3) MULTI-AGENCY COORDINATION.—In order
20 to effectively assess the risks posed to communities
21 by natural hazards and terrorist acts, planning legis-
22 lation, comprehensive plans, and regulations are cre-
23 ated based on cooperation between Federal, State,
24 and local government agencies.

1 (4) IMPLEMENTATION ELEMENTS.—Land use
2 plans contain an implementation element that—

3 (A) includes a timetable for action and a
4 definition of the respective roles and respon-
5 sibilities of agencies, local governments, and
6 citizens of the State;

7 (B) is consistent with State and local cap-
8 ital budget objectives; and

9 (C) provides the framework for decisions
10 relating to the siting of future infrastructure
11 development, including development of utilities
12 and utility distribution systems.

13 (5) COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING.—There is
14 comprehensive planning to encourage land use plans
15 that incorporate risk assessment and mitigation into
16 any of State or locally adopted—

17 (A) comprehensive plans;

18 (B) urban design guidelines;

19 (C) building codes; and

20 (D) transportation plans, addressing both
21 facility investment and operations.

22 (6) UPDATING.—The State or local government
23 addresses how comprehensive plans, including land
24 use plans, urban design guidelines, building codes
25 and transportation plans, will be updated over time.

1 (7) STANDARDS.—Comprehensive plans reflect
2 an approach that is consistent with established pro-
3 fessional planning standards.

4 (c) USE OF GRANT FUNDS.—Grant funds received
5 by a State or local government under subsection (a) shall
6 be used for one or more of the following purposes:

7 (1) Developing a comprehensive land use plan
8 and integrating natural hazard mitigation and secu-
9 rity plan elements into locally adopted and statewide
10 comprehensive plans.

11 (2) Assessing, inventorying, or mapping critical
12 public infrastructure for use in developing land use
13 and community development policies.

14 (3) Developing geographical information sys-
15 tems, including technology acquisition, data develop-
16 ment, modernization, coordination, and technical as-
17 sistance.

18 (4) Acquiring and developing scenario planning,
19 risk assessment, or vulnerability analysis technology.

20 (5) Reviewing and updating building codes, zon-
21 ing, land use regulations, and State-level enabling
22 legislation.

23 (6) Implementing CPTED (Crime Prevention
24 Through Environmental Design) initiatives.

1 (7) Assessing risk and vulnerability, particularly
2 related to land use.

3 (8) Incorporating mitigation and security ele-
4 ments in transportation plans, facilities, and oper-
5 ations.

6 (9) Incorporating regional security plans with
7 regional transportation or land use plans.

8 (10) Encouraging interagency cooperation, par-
9 ticularly between first-responders and State and
10 local planning agencies.

11 (11) Identifying natural hazard areas and inte-
12 grating them into updates of comprehensive plans,
13 land use regulations, zoning, and building codes.

14 (d) AMOUNT OF GRANT.—The amount of a grant
15 under subsection (a) shall not exceed \$1,125,000.

16 (e) COST-SHARING.—

17 (1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in para-
18 graph (2), the Federal share of a project funded
19 with a grant under subsection (a) shall not exceed
20 90 percent.

21 (2) INCREASED FEDERAL SHARE.—The Sec-
22 retary may increase the Federal share in the case of
23 a grant to a Tribal government or Native Hawaiian
24 organization if the Secretary finds that the Tribal
25 government or Native Hawaiian organization does

1 not have sufficient funds to contribute to the
2 project.

3 (f) COORDINATION.—The Secretary shall encourage
4 Federal land management agencies to coordinate land use
5 planning for Federal land with the State or local planning
6 director responsible for the drafting and updating of State
7 guide plans or guidance documents regulating land use
8 and infrastructure development on a statewide basis.

9 (g) AUDITS.—

10 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Inspector General of
11 the Department of Homeland Security shall conduct
12 an audit of a portion of the grants provided under
13 this section to ensure that all funds provided under
14 the grants are used for the purposes specified in this
15 section.

16 (2) USE OF AUDIT RESULTS.—The results of
17 audits conducted under paragraph (1) and any rec-
18 ommendations made in connection with the audits
19 shall be taken into consideration in awarding any fu-
20 ture grant under this section to a State.

21 (h) DEFINITIONS.—In this section, the following defi-
22 nitions apply:

23 (1) LAND USE PLANNING LEGISLATION.—The
24 term “land use planning legislation” means a stat-
25 ute, regulation, Executive order, or other action

1 taken by a State or local government to guide, regu-
2 late, and assist in the planning, regulation, and
3 management of land, natural resources, development
4 practices, and other activities related to the pattern
5 and scope of future land use.

6 (2) COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.—The term “com-
7 prehensive plan” means a binding or non-binding
8 planning document adopted for the purpose of regu-
9 lation and management of land, natural resources,
10 development practices, infrastructure investments,
11 and other activities related to the pattern and scope
12 of future land use and urban development.

13 (3) STATE.—The term “State” means any of
14 the following:

15 (A) One of the 50 States, the District of
16 Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico,
17 the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, or
18 the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Is-
19 lands.

20 (B) A Tribal government.

21 (C) A Native Hawaiian organization, as
22 defined in section 8(a)(15) of the Small Busi-
23 ness Act (15 U.S.C. 637(a)(15)).

24 (4) STATE PLANNING DIRECTOR.—The term
25 “State planning director” means a State official des-

1 ignated by statute or by the chief executive officer
2 of the State whose principal responsibility is the
3 drafting and updating of State guide plans or guid-
4 ance documents that regulate land use and develop-
5 ment on a statewide basis.

6 (5) LOCAL PLANNING DIRECTOR.—The term
7 “local planning director” means a local official des-
8 ignated by statute, by the mayor, or by the city
9 council whose principal responsibility is the drafting
10 and updating of local comprehensive plans or guid-
11 ance documents that regulate land use and develop-
12 ment within the local government’s jurisdiction.

13 (6) TRIBAL GOVERNMENT.—The term “Tribal
14 government” means the Tribal government of an In-
15 dian Tribe, as defined in section 4 of the Indian
16 Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act
17 (25 U.S.C. 5304).

18 **SEC. 4. SAFE COMMUNITIES PLANNING RESEARCH.**

19 (a) RESEARCH PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—The Sec-
20 retary of Homeland Security, in coordination with govern-
21 mental, nongovernmental, university, and commercial
22 partners, shall conduct research and analysis of the best
23 practices in comprehensive land use and community plan-
24 ning that aims to reduce threats posed by natural hazards
25 and acts of terrorism, focusing on—

1 (1) the integration of Federal facility security
2 with local and regional plans, codes, and regulations;

3 (2) examination of the impacts of security
4 strategies, facilities, and design on the overall phys-
5 ical and social environment of a community, includ-
6 ing the functionality and accessibility of its streets,
7 neighborhoods, civic and commercial building, and
8 public spaces; and

9 (3) integration of comprehensive mapping and
10 risk-assessment tools and strategies.

11 (b) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 2 years
12 after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall
13 report to Congress on best practices in community security
14 and safety planning, including—

15 (1) an evaluation of land use and development
16 codes and ordinances that aim to reduce the risks
17 posed by natural hazards and acts of terrorism;

18 (2) an evaluation of software and other tools
19 that have been developed to aide communities in
20 planning for safe development;

21 (3) an evaluation of codes, ordinances, security
22 design standards, and design tools that aim to en-
23 courage safe planning in the siting and design of
24 residential development; and

1 (4) an evaluation of best practices in incor-
2 porating safety and security into infrastructure plan-
3 ning, including water, wastewater, and storm water
4 facilities, transportation systems, and electricity gen-
5 eration and distribution facilities.

6 In determining best practices, the Secretary shall take into
7 consideration regional, State, and local differences, and
8 shall evaluate practices in terms of risk-reduction and
9 cost.

10 **SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

11 There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out
12 this section \$57,250,000 for each of the fiscal years 2019
13 through 2023, of which—

14 (1) \$56,250,000 shall be used for making
15 grants under section 3; and

16 (2) \$300,000 shall be used to carry out section
17 4.

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