

Union Calendar No. 472

116TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. R. 2914

[Report No. 116-574]

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

NOVEMBER 16, 2020

Additional sponsors: Mr. LAWSON of Florida, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. CARBAJAL, Ms. NORTON, Ms. VELÁZQUEZ, and Mr. MCNERNEY

NOVEMBER 16, 2020

Reported with an amendment; committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

[Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in *italic*]

[For text of introduced bill, see copy of bill as introduced on March 22, 2019]

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:*

8 (1) *FEMA.*—*The term “FEMA” means the Fed-*
9 *eral Emergency Management Agency.*

10 (2) *ADMINISTRATOR.*—*The term “Adminis-*
11 *trator” means the Administrator of FEMA.*

12 **SEC. 3. ELIGIBILITY FOR AND USE OF DISASTER ASSIST-**
13 **ANCE.**

14 (a) *FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.*—*Notwithstanding any*
15 *other provision of law, individuals and households described*
16 *in subsection (c) may be eligible for assistance made avail-*
17 *able under section 408 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster*
18 *Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5174) in*
19 *connection with a major disaster declared by the President*
20 *under section 401 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 5170), including*
21 *Hurricane Maria of 2017.*

22 (b) *USE OF FUNDS.*—*Any assistance provided pursu-*
23 *ant to subsection (a) may include costs relating to obtaining*
24 *title for a property described in subsection (c)(1), including*

1 *the cost of land surveys and any other taxes or fees associ-*
2 *ated with obtaining the title for such property.*

3 (c) *ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS OR HOUSEHOLDS.*—*With*
4 *respect to a major disaster declared by the President under*
5 *section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and*
6 *Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5170), an individual*
7 *or household described in this subsection is an individual*
8 *or household who—*

9 (1) *is residing on a property located in the area*
10 *for which the major disaster was declared but does not*
11 *have documented ownership rights to such property*
12 *and is not renting such property; or*

13 (2) *is or was residing in an area for which a*
14 *major disaster has been declared by the President*
15 *under section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster*
16 *Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C.*
17 *5170), during the designated incident period, includ-*
18 *ing residing in any housing accommodation or prop-*
19 *erty upon which a housing accommodation is located,*
20 *including any living quarters, boardinghouse, bunk-*
21 *house, manufactured home, mobile home, or travel*
22 *trailer.*

23 (d) *EVIDENCE.*—

24 (1) *CONSIDERATION.*—*In making a determina-*
25 *tion to provide assistance pursuant to this Act, the*

1 *Administrator shall consider a wide range of evi-*
2 *dence.*

3 (2) *ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF EVIDENCE.—In de-*
4 *termining if an individual or household is eligible for*
5 *assistance pursuant to this Act, the Administrator*
6 *shall accept either a declarative statement or the pres-*
7 *entation of at least one item of alternative evidence,*
8 *including the following:*

9 (A) *A utility (including gas, electric, sewer,*
10 *or water) bill with the name and address of the*
11 *individual.*

12 (B) *A merchant's statement (including a*
13 *credit card, delivery notice, or first class mail)*
14 *with the name and address of the individual.*

15 (C) *A pay stub from an employer with the*
16 *name and address of the individual.*

17 (D) *A current driver's license or State-*
18 *issued identification card of the individual.*

19 (E) *The deed or title for the applicable*
20 *property.*

21 (F) *A mortgage payment booklet or another*
22 *mortgage document.*

23 (G) *Property title of mobile home certificate*
24 *of title.*

25 (H) *A real estate property tax receipt.*

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

3 (J) A will and testament with the name
4 and address of the individual.

5 (K) In a State that does not require a will
6 and testament for the transfer of immovable
7 property, a death certificate and birth certificate
8 that establishes an automatic transfer of legal
9 ownership.

10 (L) Medical records that list the name and
11 address of the individual.

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

14 (N) Any other documentation, certification,
15 identification, or proof of occupancy or owner-
16 ship not included on this list that can reasonably
17 link the individual requesting assistance to the
18 applicable property.

19 **SEC. 4. DECLARATIVE STATEMENT.**

20 (a) *DEVELOPMENT OF DECLARATIVE STATEMENT.*—

21 (1) *IN GENERAL.*—Not later than 30 days after
22 the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator
23 shall create, in coordination with the appropriate au-
24 thorities of the applicable jurisdiction, and distribute,
25 where necessary, a declarative statement form that an

1 *applicant for assistance provided pursuant to section*
2 *3 may use to self-certify such applicant's eligibility*
3 *for assistance pursuant to this Act.*

4 (2) *PROHIBITION OF NOTARIZATION.*—*The Ad-*
5 *ministrator may not require the declarative statement*
6 *form created under paragraph (1) to require notariza-*
7 *tion by the applicant.*

8 (b) *EXEMPTIONS.*—*A declarative statement form cre-*
9 *ated under subsection (a)(1) is exempt from publication no-*
10 *tice, public comment periods, and agency information col-*
11 *lection review and approval by the Office of Management*
12 *and Budget required by the Paperwork Reduction Act (44*
13 *U.S.C. 3501 et seq.).*

14 (c) *GUIDANCE.*—*Not later than 30 days after the date*
15 *of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall provide*
16 *written notification and guidance to employees of FEMA*
17 *regarding the requirements of this Act.*

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

20 (1) *make the declarative statement form created*
21 *under subsection (a)(1) available in Spanish and*
22 *English at all active Disaster Recovery Centers; and*

23 (2) *publish in English, Spanish, and any other*
24 *locally predominant languages on the website of*
25 *FEMA and on social media the declarative statement*

1 *form and instructions on how applicants can reopen*
2 *or seek further appeal of relevant determinations.*

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 reopen*
7 *or appeal a case after such applicant has received notice*
8 *of the right to do so.*

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

10 *Section 408(c) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief*
11 *and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5174) is amend-*
12 *ed—*

13 *(1) in paragraph (2)(A)(i) by striking “to a safe*
14 *and sanitary living or functioning condition” and in-*
15 *serting “to ensure that such residences are habitable*
16 *during longer term recovery (including through co-*
17 *ordination with other sources for repair and rebuild-*
18 *ing 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 is*
22 *a cost effective alternative to other housing solutions,*
23 *including the costs associated with temporary housing*
24 *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, and*
6 *effectiveness of assistance provided under the Disaster Hous-*
7 *ing Assistance Program, including any case management*
8 *services provided, with other temporary housing options*
9 *provided by the Administrator under the Robert T. Stafford*
10 *Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C.*
11 *5121 et seq.).*

12 (b) *PROVISION OF DATA.*—*The Secretary shall ensure*
13 *that public housing authorities engaged in carrying out the*
14 *Disaster Housing Assistance Program relay data con-*
15 *cerning the extent and effectiveness of case management*
16 *services in transitioning individuals and households toward*
17 *self-sufficiency under the Program compared to other alter-*
18 *native disaster assistance programs available under the*
19 *Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assist-*
20 *ance 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 of*
24 *the House of Representatives and the Committee on Home-*
25 *land Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate a*
26 *report that contains the analysis required under subsection*

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

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