

116TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# S. 4627

To modify the Federal cost share of certain emergency assistance provided under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, to modify the activities eligible for assistance under the emergency declaration issued by the President on March 13, 2020, relating to COVID–19, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 17, 2020

Mr. MERKLEY (for himself and Mr. WYDEN) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

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## A BILL

To modify the Federal cost share of certain emergency assistance provided under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, to modify the activities eligible for assistance under the emergency declaration issued by the President on March 13, 2020, relating to COVID–19, 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 “FEMA Assistance Re-  
5 lief Act of 2020”.

1 **SEC. 2. COST SHARE.**

2 (a) TEMPORARY FEDERAL SHARE.—Notwith-  
3 standing sections 403(b), 403(c)(4), 404(a), 406(b),  
4 408(d), 408(g)(2), 428(e)(2)(B), and 503(a) of the Robert  
5 T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act  
6 (42 U.S.C. 5170b(b), 5170(c)(4), 5170c(a), 5172(b),  
7 5174(d), 5174(g)(2), 5189f(e)(2)(B), 5193(a)), for any  
8 emergency or major disaster declared by the President  
9 under such Act during the period beginning on January  
10 1, 2020, and ending on December 31, 2020, the Federal  
11 share of assistance provided under such sections shall be  
12 not less than 90 percent of the eligible cost of such assist-  
13 ance.

14 (b) COST SHARE UNDER COVID EMERGENCY DEC-  
15 LARATION.—Notwithstanding subsection (a), assistance  
16 provided under the emergency declaration issued by the  
17 President on March 13, 2020, pursuant to section 501(b)  
18 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency  
19 Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5191(b)), and under any subse-  
20 quent major disaster declaration under section 401 of such  
21 Act (42 U.S.C. 5170) that supersedes such emergency  
22 declaration, shall be at a 100 percent Federal cost share.

23 **SEC. 3. CLARIFICATION OF ASSISTANCE.**

24 (a) IN GENERAL.—For the emergency declared on  
25 March 13, 2020, by the President under section 501 of  
26 the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency As-

1 assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5191), the President may provide  
2 assistance for activities, costs, and purchases of States or  
3 local governments or the owners or operators of eligible  
4 private nonprofits, including—

5           (1) activities eligible for assistance under sec-  
6 tions 301, 415, 416, and 426 of the Robert T. Staf-  
7 ford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act  
8 (42 U.S.C. 5141, 5182, 5183, 5189d);

9           (2) backfill costs for first responders and other  
10 essential employees who are ill or quarantined;

11           (3) increased operating costs for essential gov-  
12 ernment services due to such emergency, including  
13 costs for implementing continuity plans, and shel-  
14 tering or housing for first responders, emergency  
15 managers, health providers and other essential em-  
16 ployees;

17           (4) costs of providing guidance and information  
18 to the public and for call centers to disseminate such  
19 guidance and information;

20           (5) costs associated with establishing and oper-  
21 ating virtual services;

22           (6) costs for establishing and operating remote  
23 test sites;

1           (7) training provided specifically in anticipation  
2 of or in response to the event on which such emer-  
3 gency declaration is predicated;

4           (8) personal protective equipment and other  
5 critical supplies and services for first responders and  
6 other essential employees, including individuals  
7 working in public schools, courthouses, and public  
8 transit systems;

9           (9) medical equipment, regardless of whether  
10 such equipment is used for emergency or inpatient  
11 care;

12           (10) public health costs, including provision and  
13 distribution of medicine and medical supplies;

14           (11) costs associated with maintaining alternate  
15 care facilities or related facilities currently inactive  
16 but related to future needs tied to the ongoing pan-  
17 demic event; and

18           (12) costs of procuring and distributing food to  
19 individuals affected by the pandemic through net-  
20 works established by State, local, or Tribal govern-  
21 ments, or other organizations, including restaurants  
22 and farms, and for the purchase of food directly  
23 from food producers and farmers.

24           (b) MAJOR DISASTER.—The activities described in  
25 subsection (a) may also be eligible for assistance under

1 any major disaster declared by the President under section  
2 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emer-  
3 gency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5170) that supersedes  
4 the emergency declaration described in such subsection.

5 (c) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this sec-  
6 tion shall be construed to make ineligible any assistance  
7 that would otherwise be eligible under section 403 or 502  
8 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency  
9 Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5170b, 5192).

10 (d) STATE DEFINED.—In this section, the term  
11 “State” has the meaning given the term in section 102  
12 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency  
13 Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5122).

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