

Union Calendar No. 641

118TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. R. 6997

[Report No. 118–776]

To establish an advisory group to encourage and foster collaborative efforts among individuals and entities engaged in disaster recovery relating to debris removal, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 16, 2024

Mr. LALOTA (for himself and Mr. PAPPAS) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

NOVEMBER 26, 2024

Additional sponsors: Mr. LAWLER and Mrs. GONZÁLEZ-COLÓN

NOVEMBER 26, 2024

Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union
and ordered to be printed

A BILL

To establish an advisory group to encourage and foster collaborative efforts among individuals and entities engaged in disaster recovery relating to debris removal, 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 “Disaster Contract Im-
5 provement Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. OVERSIGHT ON DEBRIS REMOVAL.**

7 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

8 (1) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term “Adminis-
9 trator” means the Administrator of the Federal
10 Emergency Management Agency.

11 (2) DEBRIS REMOVAL PROGRAM.—The term
12 “debris removal program” means the program estab-
13 lished under section 407 of the Robert T. Stafford
14 Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42
15 U.S.C. 5173).

16 (b) ADVISORY WORKING GROUP.—

17 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall es-
18 tablish an advisory working group to encourage and
19 foster collaborative efforts among individuals and en-
20 tities engaged in disaster recovery relating to debris
21 removal.

22 (2) MEMBERSHIP.—The advisory working
23 group established under paragraph (1) shall be com-
24 prised of—

1 (A) representatives from the Federal
2 Emergency Management Agency;

3 (B) representatives from the Army Corps
4 of Engineers;

5 (C) representatives from the Natural Re-
6 sources Conservation Service of the Department
7 of Agriculture;

8 (D) representatives of States, Tribal gov-
9 ernments, and units of local government; and

10 (E) subject matter experts in debris re-
11 moval, including not less than 1 representative
12 from the debris services contractor industry.

13 (c) GUIDANCE.—Not later than 1 year after the date
14 of enactment of this Act, the Administrator, in consulta-
15 tion with the advisory working group established under
16 subsection (b)(1), shall—

17 (1) determine whether guidance and procedures
18 in effect as of the date of enactment of this Act with
19 respect to the oversight and cost of debris removal
20 contracts entered into under the debris removal pro-
21 gram are sufficient; and

22 (2) if the Administrator, in consultation with
23 the advisory working group established under sub-
24 section (b)(1), determines that the guidance and
25 procedures described in paragraph (1) are insuffi-

1 cient, develop and implement additional such guid-
2 ance and procedures, including—

3 (A) a requirement that each State, Tribal
4 government, and unit of local government re-
5 ceiving a grant under the debris removal pro-
6 gram take the primary role in the oversight
7 function of debris removal;

8 (B) guidance for State, Tribal, and local
9 debris monitors relating to debris removal oper-
10 ations, debris operations oversight, and con-
11 tractor oversight, including contractor moni-
12 toring;

13 (C) guidance for streamlining the reim-
14 bursement of debris costs overall, including de-
15 bris management planning and support for re-
16 silience in debris removal operations;

17 (D) checklists, job aids, eligibility require-
18 ments, contract requirements, debris manage-
19 ment planning guidance, sample bids, and other
20 items, as determined necessary by the Adminis-
21 trator, for State and local debris monitors;

22 (E) a list of the specific debris removal
23 monitoring responsibilities expected to be com-
24 pleted by a State that receives a grant under
25 the debris removal program;

1 (F) a list of the specific debris removal
2 monitoring responsibilities expected to be com-
3 pleted by recipients of a grant under the debris
4 removal program; and

5 (G) guidance for State and Tribal govern-
6 ments and units of local government to reduce
7 duplication and inefficiency in debris removal
8 contracting across the Federal Government,
9 State and Tribal governments, and units of
10 local government.

11 (d) TRAINING.—The Administrator shall conduct
12 outreach to States, Tribal governments, and units of local
13 government with respect to any guidance or support mate-
14 rials developed under this section.

15 (e) GAO STUDY.—Not later than 1 year after the
16 date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General
17 of the United States shall conduct a study that—

18 (1) studies the use and adoption rate of ad-
19 vance contracts for debris removal by selected
20 States, Tribal governments, and units of local gov-
21 ernment;

22 (2) identifies the benefits and challenges of ad-
23 vance contracts for debris removal;

24 (3) with respect to the reporting and informa-
25 tion sharing processes, as of the date of enactment

1 of this Act, for advance contracts for debris removal
2 between States and units of local government and
3 Federal partners—

4 (A) assesses those processes; and

5 (B) makes any necessary recommendations
6 for those processes;

7 (4) studies—

8 (A) the process for setting Federal reim-
9 bursement rates for the debris removal pro-
10 gram;

11 (B) the use of penalties, as of the date of
12 enactment of this Act, for violations of law and
13 regulations relating to debris removal; and

14 (C) fraud, waste, and abuse relating to the
15 debris removal program, including case studies;
16 and

17 (5) makes any necessary recommendations for
18 improvements to oversight and fraud prevention
19 across the debris removal program.

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