

## Union Calendar No.

116<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
2<sup>D</sup> SESSION

# H. R. 4358

[Report No. 116-]

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.

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### 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

OCTOBER --, 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 italics]

[For text of introduced bill, see copy of bill as introduced on September 17, 2019]

# **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 2020”.*

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 *Congress finds the following:*

8 *(1) Preliminary damage assessments play a crit-*  
9 *ical role in assessing and validating the impact and*  
10 *magnitude of a disaster.*

11 *(2) Through the preliminary damage assessment*  
12 *process, representatives from the Federal Emergency*  
13 *Management Agency validate information gathered by*  
14 *State and local officials that serves as the basis for*  
15 *disaster assistance requests.*

16 *(3) Various factors can impact the duration of a*  
17 *preliminary damage assessment and the cor-*  
18 *responding submission of a major disaster request,*  
19 *however, the average time between when a disaster oc-*  
20 *curs, and the submission of a corresponding disaster*  
21 *request has been found to be approximately twenty*  
22 *days longer for flooding disasters.*

23 *(4) With communities across the country facing*  
24 *increased instances of catastrophic flooding and other*  
25 *extreme weather events, accurate and efficient pre-*

1        *liminary damage assessments have become critically*  
2        *important to the relief process for impacted states and*  
3        *municipalities.*

4        **SEC. 3. REPORT TO CONGRESS.**

5        (a) *IN GENERAL.*—*Not later than 90 days after the*  
6        *date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Fed-*  
7        *eral Emergency Management Agency shall submit to Con-*  
8        *gress a report describing the preliminary damage assess-*  
9        *ment process, as supported by the Federal Emergency Man-*  
10       *agement Agency in the 5 years before the date of enactment*  
11       *of this Act.*

12       (b) *CONTENTS.*—*The report described in subsection (a)*  
13       *shall contain the following:*

14                (1) *The process of the Federal Emergency Man-*  
15                *agement Agency for deploying personnel to support*  
16                *preliminary damage assessments.*

17                (2) *The number of Agency staff participating on*  
18                *disaster assessment teams.*

19                (3) *The training and experience of such staff de-*  
20                *scribed in paragraph (2).*

21                (4) *A calculation of the average amount of time*  
22                *disaster assessment teams described in paragraph (1)*  
23                *are deployed to a disaster area.*

24                (5) *The efforts of the Agency to maintain a con-*  
25                *sistent liaison between the Agency and State, local,*

1        *Tribal, and territorial officials within a disaster*  
2        *area.*

3        **SEC. 4. PRELIMINARY DAMAGE ASSESSMENT.**

4        *(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date*  
5        *of enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Federal*  
6        *Emergency Management Agency shall establish a training*  
7        *regime under section 206.33(b) of title 44, Code of Federal*  
8        *Regulations, within the Federal Emergency Management*  
9        *Agency to ensure preliminary damage assessments are con-*  
10       *ducted and reviewed under consistent guidelines.*

11       *(b) ANNUAL REPORT.—The Administrator shall annu-*  
12       *ally submit to Congress a report on the number and type*  
13       *of instances under which Federal Emergency Management*  
14       *Agency personnel have overturned decisions made by per-*  
15       *sonnel in the field.*

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

19                *(1) describing the establishment of disaster*  
20                *guidelines from Federal Emergency Management*  
21                *Agency personnel described under subsection (a);*

22                *(2) assessing whether the duration of the deploy-*  
23                *ment of Federal Emergency Management Agency per-*  
24                *sonnel to conduct a preliminary damage assessment is*  
25                *longer based on specific disaster conditions; and*

1           (3) *containing legislative recommendations to*  
2           *improve the operation, deployment, and staffing of*  
3           *disaster personnel.*

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