

that will fill out what is called a PW, project worksheet, trying to get reimbursement for something that is allowed under Federal law under the Stafford Act. Current law says the FEMA administrator may reimburse interest costs.

As my good friend from Florida just noted, in some cases there are bureaucrats working through the paperwork for 10 years. In my home State of Louisiana, we have unresolved project worksheets dating back to Hurricane Katrina in 2005. According to my math, that was a long time ago.

Mr. Speaker, we can't cause the burden of this debt to be undertaken by the local governments and by State governments. Rather than making it an option or a discretionary reimbursement, this bill ensures that the interest costs shall be reimbursable. Then local governments can borrow money, and there is more of an incentive for FEMA to actually expedite the approval of these project worksheets.

I think it is a good clarification of law, removing uncertainty for local and State governments and electric co-ops. They will be able to rebuild faster after disaster and reduce the costs associated with delays.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 2672, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. GRAVES) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2672, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

DISASTER MANAGEMENT COSTS MODERNIZATION ACT

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 7671) to amend section 324 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to incentivize States, Indian Tribes, and Territories to close disaster recovery projects by authorizing the use of excess funds for management costs for other disaster recovery projects.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the joint resolution is as follows:

H.R. 7671

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Disaster Management Costs Modernization Act".

SEC. 2. USE OF EXCESS FUNDS FOR MANAGEMENT COSTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 324 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5165b) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)(2)—

(A) by redesignating subparagraphs (A) and (B) as clauses (i) and (ii), respectively, and adjusting the margins accordingly; and

(B) in the matter preceding clause (i), as so redesignated, by striking "provide the following percentage rates" and inserting "provide—

"(A) excess funds for management costs as described in subsection (c); and

"(B) the following percentage rates";

(2) by redesignating subsection (c) as subsection (d); and

(3) by inserting after subsection (b) the following:

"(c) USE OF EXCESS FUNDS FOR MANAGEMENT COSTS.—

"(1) DEFINITION.—In this subsection, the term 'excess funds for management costs' means the difference between—

"(A) the amount of the applicable specific management costs authorized under subsection (b)(1) and subsection (b)(2)(B); and

"(B) as of the date on which the grant award is closed, the amount of funding for management costs activities expended by the grantee or subgrantee receiving the financial assistance for costs described in subparagraph (A).

"(2) AVAILABILITY OF EXCESS FUNDS FOR MANAGEMENT COSTS.—The President may make available to a grantee or subgrantee receiving financial assistance under section 403, 404, 406, 407, or 502 any excess funds for management costs.

"(3) USE OF FUNDS.—Excess funds for management costs made available to a grantee or subgrantee under paragraph (2) may be used for—

"(A) activities associated with building capacity to prepare for, recover from, or mitigate the impacts of a major disaster or emergency declared under section 401 or 501, respectively; and

"(B) management costs associated with any—

"(i) major disaster;

"(ii) emergency;

"(iii) disaster preparedness measure; or

"(iv) mitigation activity or measure authorized under section 203, 204, 205, or 404.

"(4) AVAILABILITY.—Excess funds for management costs made available to a grantee or subgrantee under paragraph (2) shall remain available to the grantee or subgrantee until the date that is 5 years after the date on which the excess funds for management costs are made available under paragraph (2)."

(b) APPLICABILITY.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to any grant award in relation to a major disaster or emergency declared under section 401 or 501, respectively, of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5170, 5191)—

(1) the declaration of which is made on or after the date of enactment of this Act; and

(2) that is funded with amounts appropriated on or after the date of enactment of this Act.

(c) GAO STUDY.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives a report—

(1) on the actual management costs described in section 324 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5165b) during the period of a major disaster declaration under section 401 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 5170) to determine whether the amount set aside for those management costs after the date of enactment of this Act is appropriate; and

(2) that includes the management costs described in section 324 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5165b) for each disaster declared under during the period of a major disaster declaration under section 401 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 5170) during the 5-year period preceding the date of the report, the amount set aside for those management costs, the use of those management costs, the length of each disaster, and the reason for the length of each disaster.

(d) NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS.—No additional funds are authorized to be appropriated to carry out the amendments made by subsection (a).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. GRAVES) and the gentleman from Oregon (Ms. HOYLE) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material into the RECORD on H.R. 7671.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Louisiana?

There was no objection.

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 7671, the Disaster Management Costs Modernization Act, would provide States flexibility and allow management cost funds to be used across any open disaster, simplifying the administration of these funds for State and emergency managers.

While the Stafford Act currently does make a percentage of disaster dollars available for management costs, each disaster's management costs are tied directly to that declaration, creating accounting challenges.

Mr. Speaker, what often happens is there are multiple disasters occurring in a community at the same time. Trying to separate the administrative costs is difficult, if not impossible.

H.R. 7671 would provide more flexibility and ensure that States can better manage disasters by giving them the flexibility.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. HOYLE of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 7671, legislation authored by Representative NEGUSE and cosponsored by Representatives D'ESPOSITO, TITUS, EZELL, and STANTON.

The bill will incentivize faster recovery for federally declared disasters and lower costs. It also enables State and local emergency managers to build capacity for future disaster preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery.

When managing Federal disaster declarations, States administer FEMA grants that may be worth billions of

dollars. FEMA allows States to utilize a percentage of those grants to cover the cost of administrator requirements and grant management.

Current law requires management costs to be strictly tied to each specific disaster declaration. However, most States are managing recovery for multiple disaster declarations simultaneously.

A project inspector working a full day may visit multiple disaster sites in a State. If those sites are associated with more than one disaster, all associated costs must be parceled out to possibly dozens of open grants. This is inefficient, wastes taxpayer dollars, and slows recovery.

This bill encourages efficiency by allowing States to use their management funds across all open disasters. Additionally, H.R. 7671 helps build capacity at FEMA and at the local level by rewarding applicants that complete recoveries from major disaster declarations quickly.

One of the most common concerns we hear from emergency management experts is that FEMA, States, and local governments do not have sufficient personnel or resources to prepare for and respond to disasters. Increasing efficiency and building capacity is one of the most important actions we can take to ensure nationwide disaster readiness and empower State and local emergency managers. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. NEGUSE).

Mr. NEGUSE. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Oregon, Representative HOYLE, for her kind words and her articulate description of the bill that we are considering today.

In particular, I thank Ranking Member LARSEN for his leadership on the committee and his help in getting this bill across the finish line, we hope, in the days and weeks ahead.

I thank my friend and colleague, the chairman of this distinguished committee. I certainly wish him well in all of his future endeavors. I have enjoyed our verbal sparring on the Select Committee on the Climate Crisis and the House Committee on Natural Resources. I have appreciated his friendship and also appreciated his leadership and his support for this piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about the Disaster Management Costs Modernization Act. As you heard from Representative HOYLE, as we continue to face increasing numbers of natural disasters across our country—wildfires, floods, hurricanes, and more—it is critically important that we work to equip our communities with the resources they need.

My home State of Colorado has seen firsthand the devastating impacts of these disasters, as we have unfortunately experienced record-breaking and deadly wildfires, drought, and flood conditions all over in just the past few years.

Mr. Speaker, this bill would strengthen our efforts to prepare for and mitigate the impacts of future disasters across our country. It is a simple bill. When State and local governments receive Federal assistance through the Federal Emergency Management Agency, otherwise known as FEMA, they are allocated a percentage of that assistance for management costs or administrative costs to manage that disaster.

However, as you heard Representative HOYLE describe, those management costs are awarded for a particular disaster. When managing multiple open disasters, the reality is that that results in unnecessary administrative burdens on State and local governments and limits flexibility for disaster recovery and preparedness.

Mr. Speaker, let me give you a very practical example of what this looks like. In Colorado's Second Congressional District, we have been home to multiple historically large and destructive wildfires. Oftentimes, these wildfires happen simultaneously in different parts of our State and indeed different parts of my district.

In my view, the ability for the State government and local governments to apply these cost-sharing dollars these grants, from FEMA for different disasters simultaneously has been inhibited by, in my view, a nonsensical approach in current law. That is what we seek to change, Mr. Speaker.

It is a commonsense way to cut red tape and ultimately benefit communities across the West and across the country as they continue to grapple with natural disasters in the years ahead.

I am proud this bill is supported by a broad spectrum of Coloradans, Republicans and Democrats. That includes my colleagues in this Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative HOYLE and the chairman. I encourage everyone to support this important bill.

Ms. HOYLE of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, emergency managers need more resources and capacity to effectively respond to increasingly frequent and severe disasters. This bill incentivizes faster disaster recovery, gets communities back on their feet, and creates more capacity in Federal and local emergency management offices.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, first of all, I thank the gentleman from Colorado for his kind words and for sponsoring this legislation, for offering this legislation.

Just to put a face on it, in 2020 and in 2021, my home State of Louisiana had Hurricane Laura, Delta, and Zeta. In 2021, Hurricane Ida came through the State. In some cases you had the exact same footprint for all four hurricanes. You are asking an emergency re-

sponder to try to separate the work that they are doing, whether it was for Hurricane Laura or Hurricane Ida. You simply can't do it.

This does simplify the process. I think it will expedite recovery and remove some of the bureaucracy from the aftermath of disasters. It will provide States more flexibility in managing disasters, allowing them to have a greater focus on the needs of disaster victims.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 7671, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. GRAVES) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 7671.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PROMOTING OPPORTUNITIES TO WIDEN ELECTRICAL RESILIENCE ACT OF 2024

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 9541) to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to authorize Federal agencies to provide certain essential assistance for hazard mitigation for electric utilities, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 9541

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Promoting Opportunities to Widen Electrical Resilience Act of 2024" or the "POWER Act of 2024".

SEC. 2. ESSENTIAL ASSISTANCE.

(a) Section 403 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5170b) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(e) ELECTRIC UTILITIES.—

“(1) HAZARD MITIGATION ACTIVITIES.—An electric utility may carry out cost-effective hazard mitigation activities jointly or otherwise in combination with activities for the restoration of power carried out with assistance provided under this section.

“(2) ELIGIBILITY FOR ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE.—In any case in which an electric utility facility receives assistance under this section for the emergency restoration of power, the receipt of such assistance shall not render such facility ineligible for any hazard mitigation assistance under section 406 for which such facility is otherwise eligible.”.

(b) APPLICABILITY.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall only apply to amounts appropriated on or after the date of enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. GRAVES) and the gentleman from Oregon (Ms. HOYLE) each will control 20 minutes.