

HOUSE BILL 1795

By Capley

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 58,  
Chapter 2, Part 1, relative to natural disasters.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 58, Chapter 2, Part 1, is amended by adding the following as a new section:

(a) There is created a program to be administered by TEMA that shall be known as the "Natural Disaster Relief Program".

(b) A county may request a grant from the program to help offset the costs incurred by the county in responding to a natural disaster if:

- (1) A natural disaster has occurred within the county;
- (2) The county executive has declared a state of emergency; and
- (3) The damages resulting from the natural disaster do not exceed the threshold for federal disaster relief.

(c) A county receiving a grant under this section may use the money:

- (1) To repair or replace public roads, buildings, utilities, and other infrastructure owned by the local governments;
- (2) For emergency measures for saving lives;
- (3) To protect public health and safety or property; and
- (4) To remove debris from publicly or privately owned land and waterways.

(d) TEMA shall evaluate a request for a grant, determine the amount of the grant, and disburse the grant if TEMA determines that the criteria in subsection (b) have been met.

(e) Grants under this section are contingent upon the availability of funds that have been specifically allocated for the program in the general appropriations act. It is the legislative intent that appropriations to the program recur on a yearly basis.

(f) Grants disbursed pursuant to this section shall not exceed two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000). A county may receive a grant under this section once per calendar year.

(g) As used in this section:

(1) "Natural disaster" means any hurricane, tornado, storm, flood, high water, wind-driven water, tidal wave, tsunami, earthquake, volcanic eruption, landslide, mudslide, snowstorm, ice storm, drought, fire, explosion, civil disturbance, or other catastrophe that causes or may cause substantial damage or injury to property;

(2) "Program" means the natural disaster relief program created in subsection (a); and

(3) "TEMA" means the Tennessee emergency management agency.

SECTION 2. This act takes effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.