117TH CONGRESS 1ST SESSION

H.R. 3709

AN ACT

- To direct the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to submit to Congress a report on preliminary damage assessments and make necessary improvements to processes in the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and for other purposes.
 - 1 Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-
 - ${\it 2\ tives\ of\ the\ United\ States\ of\ America\ in\ Congress\ assembled},$

1 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

- This Act may be cited as the "Preliminary Damage
- 3 Assessment Improvement Act of 2021".

4 SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

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- 5 Congress finds the following:
- 6 (1) Preliminary damage assessments play a 7 critical role in assessing and validating the impact 8 and magnitude of a disaster.
 - (2) Through the preliminary damage assessment process, representatives from the Federal Emergency Management Agency validate information gathered by State and local officials that serves as the basis for disaster assistance requests.
 - (3) Various factors can impact the duration of a preliminary damage assessment and the corresponding submission of a major disaster request, however, the average time between when a disaster occurs, and the submission of a corresponding disaster request has been found to be approximately twenty days longer for flooding disasters.
 - (4) With communities across the country facing increased instances of catastrophic flooding and other extreme weather events, accurate and efficient preliminary damage assessments have become critically important to the relief process for impacted States and municipalities.

1 SEC. 3. REPORT TO CONGRESS.

2	(a) In General.—Not later than 90 days after the					
3	date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the					
4	Federal Emergency Management Agency shall submit to					
5	Congress a report describing the preliminary damage as-					
6	sessment process, as supported by the Federal Emergency					
7	Management Agency in the 5 years before the date of en-					
8	actment of this Act.					
9	(b) Contents.—The report described in subsection					
10	(a) shall contain the following:					
11	(1) The process of the Federal Emergency					
12	Management Agency for deploying personnel to sup-					
13	port preliminary damage assessments.					
14	(2) The number of Agency staff participating					
15	on disaster assessment teams.					
16	(3) The training and experience of such staff					
17	described in paragraph (2).					
18	(4) A calculation of the average amount of time					
19	disaster assessment teams described in paragraph					
20	(1) are deployed to a disaster area.					
21	(5) The efforts of the Agency to maintain a					
22	consistent liaison between the Agency and State,					
23	local, tribal, and territorial officials within a disaster					

area.

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1 SEC. 4. PRELIMINARY DAMAGE ASSESSMENT.

- 2 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 6 months after the
- 3 date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the
- 4 Federal Emergency Management Agency shall convene an
- 5 advisory panel consisting of emergency management per-
- 6 sonnel employed by State, local, territorial, or tribal au-
- 7 thorities, and the representative organizations of such per-
- 8 sonnel to assist the Agency in improving critical compo-
- 9 nents of the preliminary damage assessment process.

(b) Membership.—

- 11 (1) IN GENERAL.—This advisory panel shall
 12 consist of at least 2 representatives from national
 13 emergency management organizations and at least 1
 14 representative from each of the 10 regions of the
 15 Federal Emergency Management Agency, selected
 16 from emergency management personnel employed by
- 17 State, local, territorial, or tribal authorities within
- each region.
- 19 (2) Inclusion on Panel.—To the furthest ex-
- tent practicable, representation on the advisory
- 21 panel shall include emergency management per-
- sonnel from both rural and urban jurisdictions.
- (c) Considerations.—The advisory panel convened
- 24 under subsection (a) shall—
- 25 (1) consider—

- (A) establishing a training regime to en-1 2 sure preliminary damage assessments are conducted and reviewed under consistent guide-3 4 lines; (B) utilizing a common technological plat-6 form to integrate data collected by State and 7 local governments with data collected by the 8 Agency; and 9 (C) assessing instruction materials provided by the Agency for omissions of pertinent 10 11 information or language that conflicts with 12 other statutory requirements; and 13 (2) identify opportunities for streamlining the 14 consideration of preliminary damage assessments by 15 the Agency, including eliminating duplicative paper-16 work requirements and ensuring consistent commu-17 nication and decision making among Agency staff. 18 (d) Interim Report.—Not later than 18 months
- after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall submit to Congress a report regarding the findings of the advisory panel, steps that will be undertaken by the Agency to implement the findings of the advisory panel, and additional legislation that may be necessary to implement the findings of the findings of the advisory panel.

1	(e) Rulemaking and Final Report.—Not later					
2	than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the					
3	Administrator shall issue such regulations as are nec					
4	essary to implement the recommendations of the advisor					
5	panel and submit to Congress a report discussing—					
6	(1) the implementation of recommendations					
7	from the advisory panel;					
8	(2) the identification of any additional chal					
9	lenges to the preliminary damage assessment proc					
10	ess, including whether specific disasters result in					
11	longer preliminary damage assessments; and					
12	(3) any additional legislative recommendations					
13	necessary to improve the preliminary damage assess					
14	ment process.					
	Passed the House of Representatives November 4					
	2021.					

Attest:

Clerk.

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