

118TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 6450

To provide for a National Disaster Safety Board, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NOVEMBER 17, 2023

Ms. PORTER (for herself and Ms. MACE) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

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## A BILL

To provide for a National Disaster Safety Board, 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; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

4 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the  
5 “National Disaster Safety Board Act of 2023”.

6 (b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for  
7 this Act is as follows:

- Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
- Sec. 2. Definitions.
- Sec. 3. Establishment and purpose.
- Sec. 4. General authority.
- Sec. 5. Recommendations and responses.
- Sec. 6. Reports and studies.
- Sec. 7. Appointment and organization.
- Sec. 8. Methodology.

Sec. 9. Administrative.

Sec. 10. Disclosure, availability, and use of information.

Sec. 11. Training.

Sec. 12. Authorization of appropriations.

Sec. 13. Authority of the Inspector General.

Sec. 14. Evaluation and audit of National Disaster Safety Board.

1 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

2 In this Act:

3 (1) **ACT OF VIOLENCE.**—The term “act of vio-  
4 lence” means an offense described in section 16(a)  
5 of title 18, United States Code.

6 (2) **BOARD.**—The term “Board” means the Na-  
7 tional Disaster Safety Board established under sec-  
8 tion 3.

9 (3) **CHAIRPERSON.**—The term “Chairperson”  
10 means the Chairperson of the Board designated  
11 under section 7.

12 (4) **ECONOMIC INJURY.**—The term “economic  
13 injury” has the meaning given the term “substantial  
14 economic injury” in section 7(b) of the Small Busi-  
15 ness Act (15 U.S.C. 636(b)).

16 (5) **INCIDENT.**—The term “incident” means a  
17 natural hazard or other circumstance that the Board  
18 decides to review.

19 (6) **INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND**  
20 **RESEARCH INSTITUTION.**—The term “institution of  
21 higher education and research institution” means—

1 (A) an institution of higher education (as  
2 defined in section 101 of the Higher Education  
3 Act (20 U.S.C. 1001));

4 (B) a National Laboratory (as defined in  
5 section 2 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (42  
6 U.S.C. 15801));

7 (C) a laboratory described in section  
8 308(c)(2) of the Homeland Security Act of  
9 2002 (6 U.S.C. 188(c)(2));

10 (D) the National Domestic Preparedness  
11 Consortium established under section 1204 of  
12 the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11  
13 Commission Act of 2007 (6 U.S.C. 1102) and  
14 the members of such Consortium; and

15 (E) a research institution associated with  
16 an institution of higher education.

17 (7) NATURAL HAZARD.—The term “natural  
18 hazard”—

19 (A) means a major disaster, as defined in  
20 paragraph (2) of section 102 of the Robert T.  
21 Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assist-  
22 ance Act (42 U.S.C. 5122), that is naturally oc-  
23 ccurring, regardless of—

24 (i) whether the President makes a de-  
25 termination with respect to severity and

1 magnitude of the disaster under such para-  
2 graph; or

3 (ii) the result of such a determination;

4 (B) includes any naturally occurring heat  
5 wave, wind storm, wildfire, wildland urban  
6 interface fire, urban conflagration fire, or dust  
7 storm;

8 (C) includes any combination of events  
9 covered by subparagraphs (A) and (B) that  
10 causes or threatens to cause loss of human life,  
11 or human or economic injury, as determined by  
12 the Board; and

13 (D) does not include a technological dis-  
14 aster.

15 (8) STATE.—The term “State” has the mean-  
16 ing given the term in section 102 of the Robert T.  
17 Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance  
18 Act (42 U.S.C. 5122).

19 (9) TECHNOLOGICAL DISASTER.—The term  
20 “technological disaster” means an incident that—

21 (A) is caused by human error or malfunc-  
22 tion in technology, including a dam or struc-  
23 tural failure, a fire (other than a naturally oc-  
24 ccurring wildfire, wildland urban interface fire,  
25 urban conflagration fire, or arson), a hazardous

1 material incident, a nuclear accident, and a  
2 power and telecommunications failure; and

3 (B) causes loss of human life, or human or  
4 economic injury, as determined by the Board.

5 (10) **TERRORISM.**—The term “terrorism” has  
6 the meaning given the term in section 2 of the  
7 Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 101).

8 (11) **TRIBAL GOVERNMENT.**—The term “Tribal  
9 Government” means the governing body of any In-  
10 dian or Alaska Native Tribe, band, nation, pueblo,  
11 village, or community that the Secretary of the Inte-  
12 rior acknowledges to exist as an Indian Tribe under  
13 the Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act of  
14 1994 (25 U.S.C. 5130 et seq.).

15 **SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT AND PURPOSE.**

16 (a) **ORGANIZATION.**—There is established in the exec-  
17 utive branch a National Disaster Safety Board, which  
18 shall be an independent establishment, as defined in sec-  
19 tion 104 of title 5, United States Code.

20 (b) **PURPOSE.**—The purposes of the Board are—

21 (1) to reduce loss of life, injury, and economic  
22 injury caused by future incidents by learning from  
23 natural hazards, including the impacts and under-  
24 lying factors of such incidents, in a standardized  
25 way;

1           (2) to maintain a focus that is future-looking  
2           and national in scope, by applying what the Board  
3           learns through the trends that emerge from the inci-  
4           dents the Board reviews nationally to prevent loss of  
5           life, or human or economic injury, not only in the af-  
6           fected jurisdiction, but nationally, as the Board de-  
7           termines relevant;

8           (3) in carrying out reviews, analyses, and rec-  
9           ommendations, not to be accusatory in nature and  
10          the Board shall not seek to find blame in any indi-  
11          vidual or organization, or second-guess any relevant  
12          authorities;

13          (4) to address systemic causes behind the loss  
14          of life and human or economic injury in incidents,  
15          including by recommending the augmentation of re-  
16          sources available to entities responsible for man-  
17          aging incident consequences; and

18          (5) while preventing economic injury as part of  
19          the mission of the Board, when relevant, to prioritize  
20          efforts that focus on lifesaving and injury preven-  
21          tion, especially in disproportionately impacted com-  
22          munities, as its work determines them to be.

23 **SEC. 4. GENERAL AUTHORITY.**

24          (a) **AUTHORITY TO REVIEW.**—

1           (1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subsection (b),  
2           the Board shall review and establish the facts, cir-  
3           cumstances, and cause or probable cause of the loss  
4           of life, human injury, and economic injury due to a  
5           natural hazard with 10 or more fatalities or that  
6           meets the requirements described in paragraph (5)  
7           or (6) of subsection (b) that occurs after the date  
8           of enactment of this Act.

9           (2) DUE TO A NATURAL HAZARD INCIDENT DE-  
10          FINED.—For purposes of paragraph (1), the term  
11          “due to a natural hazard” means a fatality that, if  
12          not for the natural hazard incident, as the case may  
13          be, would not have occurred within the time frame  
14          of the incident, as defined by standards developed by  
15          the Board.

16          (b) DETERMINATION OF WHETHER INCIDENT WAR-  
17          RANTS BOARD REVIEW.—In carrying out subsection (a),  
18          the Board—

19               (1) may begin the review of an incident, includ-  
20               ing by monitoring the natural hazard and collecting  
21               facts, before the total number of fatalities is known  
22               if the Board determines that the natural hazard in-  
23               cident has the potential to cause 10 or more fatali-  
24               ties at its onset, in accordance with the policies and  
25               procedures established by the Board;

1           (2) may, by a two-thirds vote, decide that an in-  
2           cident that caused 10 or more fatalities does not re-  
3           quire a review and shall issue a public statement ex-  
4           plaining the determination;

5           (3) may, by a majority vote, decide to review  
6           any natural hazard incident that occurs after the  
7           date of enactment of this Act upon request from a  
8           representative of an affected State, Tribal Govern-  
9           ment, or unit of local government, regardless of the  
10          number of fatalities;

11          (4) may, by a majority vote, decide to review  
12          any natural hazard incident that occurs after the  
13          date of enactment of this Act upon recommendation  
14          by the Office for the Protection of Disproportion-  
15          ately Impacted Communities of the Board, which the  
16          Office may make because of the incident's impacts  
17          on populations that are socially, medically, or eco-  
18          nominically vulnerable, as decided by the Office;

19          (5) may, by a majority vote, decide to review a  
20          natural hazard incident that occurs after the date of  
21          enactment of this Act if—

22                 (A) the Board determines that information  
23                 may be gained by the review that will be useful  
24                 in reducing systemic causes behind the loss of  
25                 life and human or economic injury; and



1 (B) the incident—

2 (i) did not result in 10 or more fatali-  
3 ties; and

4 (ii)(I) could have resulted in a large  
5 number of fatalities if not for swift inter-  
6 vention or a shift in the course of events;  
7 or

8 (II) resulted in, as determined by the  
9 Board—

10 (aa) a significant amount of eco-  
11 nomic or infrastructure damage;

12 (bb) significant human displace-  
13 ment; or

14 (cc) a significant number of se-  
15 vere non-fatal injuries or cases of se-  
16 vere illness; and

17 (6) shall, by majority vote, determine whether  
18 each incident for which the President issues a major  
19 disaster declaration under section 401 of the Robert  
20 T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assist-  
21 ance Act (42 U.S.C. 5170) meets the criteria for re-  
22 view under paragraph (5).

23 (c) NATURE OF REVIEW.—

24 (1) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out a review  
25 under this Act, the Board shall—

1 (A) conduct the review to determine the  
2 facts, conditions, and circumstances relating to  
3 the loss of life, human injury, and economic in-  
4 jury due to an incident;

5 (B) following an initial assessment of an  
6 incident by the Board, notify any individual or  
7 organization that the Board anticipates will be  
8 affected by the review as to the extent of the  
9 expected review response of the Board;

10 (C) use the results of the review under  
11 subparagraph (A) to—

12 (i) determine how and why people die  
13 and are injured during an incident; and

14 (ii) issue recommendations to prevent  
15 or mitigate the loss of life, human injury,  
16 or economic injury due to similar incidents;  
17 and

18 (D) report on the facts and circumstances  
19 of the incident review, including the pre-inci-  
20 dent resilience or vulnerabilities of the incident  
21 area or population.

22 (2) GENERALIZED NATURE OF REVIEWS.—A  
23 review of loss of life and injury conducted by the  
24 Board shall—

25 (A) be generalized;

1 (B) focus on trends across an incident; and

2 (C) not aim to determine the exact indi-  
3 vidual cause of death or injury of any affected  
4 people.

5 (3) FACT-FINDING PROCEEDING.—Any review  
6 of an incident by the Board under this Act shall be  
7 a fact-finding proceeding with no adverse parties.

8 (4) LIMITATION OF APPLICABILITY OF OTHER  
9 ACTS.—

10 (A) ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE ACT.—  
11 Any review proceedings of the Board under this  
12 Act shall not be—

13 (i) subject to the section 551 of title  
14 5, United States Code; or

15 (ii) conducted for the purpose of de-  
16 termining the rights, liabilities, or blame of  
17 any person, as the review is not an adju-  
18 dicatory proceeding.

19 (B) PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT.—Chap-  
20 ter 35 of title 44, United States Code, shall not  
21 apply to the review proceedings of the Board  
22 under this Act.

23 (C) FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
24 ACT.—Chapter 10 of part I of title 5, United  
25 States Code, shall not apply to the Board.

1           (5) INITIATING REVIEWS.—The Board shall ini-  
2           tiate a review of an incident by monitoring the situa-  
3           tion and assessing available facts to determine the  
4           appropriate review response, without interfering in  
5           any ongoing lifesaving and life sustaining efforts un-  
6           derway by other entities.

7           (6) ALIGNMENT AND COORDINATION.—In car-  
8           rying out this Act, the Board shall coordinate with  
9           Federal, State, local, and Tribal entities to—

10                   (A) establish or adopt standard methods of  
11                   measuring the impacts of natural hazards and  
12                   accessing response capacity and capabilities to  
13                   maintain consistency and allow for the analysis  
14                   of trends over time;

15                   (B) ensure that the standard data sets and  
16                   formats necessary for reviews developed under  
17                   subparagraph (A) are propagated among Fed-  
18                   eral, State, local, and Tribal entities that may  
19                   be involved in response operations;

20                   (C) leverage, to the extent practicable,  
21                   data collected using standard data sets and for-  
22                   mats established under subparagraph (B) by  
23                   Federal entities involved in response operations  
24                   to avoid any duplication of data collection; and

1 (D) during incident response operations,  
2 coordinate with partners active in the operation  
3 to collect data remotely or take other actions  
4 that the Board finds necessary to align and co-  
5 ordinate the requirements of the review with  
6 ongoing operations, including through the re-  
7 quirements under paragraph (7).

8 (7) INCIDENT COMMAND.—The Board shall—

9 (A) recognize the role of incident command  
10 systems to address incidents;

11 (B) observe the incident command system  
12 to identify and coordinate review needs related  
13 to the preservation and collection of information  
14 and evidence; and

15 (C) collect information and evidence from  
16 the incident command in a timely and reason-  
17 able manner so as not to interfere with the op-  
18 erations of the incident command.

19 (8) PARTIES TO THE REVIEW.—

20 (A) PARTICIPANTS.—Subject to subpara-  
21 graph (B), the Board may invite 1 or more en-  
22 tities to serve as a party in a review on a vol-  
23 untary basis, and any party participant shall be  
24 required to follow all directions and instructions  
25 from the Board.

1 (B) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—In designating an  
2 entity to serve as a party under subparagraph  
3 (A), the Board may designate only a Federal,  
4 State, or local government agency or private or-  
5 ganization whose employees, functions, activi-  
6 ties, or products were involved in the incident,  
7 including responsible parties, and that can pro-  
8 vide suitable qualified technical personnel to ac-  
9 tively assist in the review.

10 (C) REPRESENTATIVES OF ELIGIBLE ENTI-  
11 TIES.—To the extent practicable, a representa-  
12 tive proposed by an entity designated as a party  
13 under subparagraph (A) to participate in the  
14 review may not be an individual who had direct  
15 involvement in the incident under review.

16 (D) REVOCATION OF PARTY STATUS.—A  
17 designation as a party under subparagraph (A)  
18 may be revoked or suspended by the Board if  
19 the party fails to comply with assigned duties  
20 and instructions, withholds information, or oth-  
21 erwise acts in a manner prejudicial or disrupt-  
22 tive to a review.

23 (E) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in  
24 this paragraph shall be construed to establish a

1 right for any entity to participate in a Board  
2 review as a party.

3 (F) INTERNAL REVIEW BY A PARTY.—To  
4 assure coordination of concurrent efforts, a  
5 party to a review that conducts or authorizes an  
6 internal review of the processes and procedures  
7 of the party as a result of an incident that the  
8 Board is reviewing shall—

9 (i) inform the Board of the nature of  
10 the review; and

11 (ii) provide to the Board findings  
12 from the review.

13 (9) REVIEW PROCEDURES.—In addition to any  
14 procedures required under this Act, the Board shall  
15 determine and publish detailed review procedures as  
16 the Board determines necessary.

17 (10) PRODUCTS.—The Board may use any me-  
18 dium that will effectively convey the findings and  
19 recommendations of the Board to the targeted audi-  
20 ence of such findings or recommendations.

21 (d) REVIEW BY AFFECTED AUTHORITIES.—

22 (1) IN GENERAL.—When the Board has com-  
23 pleted the findings and recommendations or other  
24 products as a result of a review under this Act, the  
25 Board shall provide all affected States, Tribal Gov-

1 ernments, and units of local government, or their  
2 designees, an opportunity to review and comment  
3 not later than 30 days before the publication of the  
4 findings or recommendations.

5 (2) REQUIREMENT.—The Board shall make  
6 every reasonable effort, within its discretion, to re-  
7 spond to requests for additional information and  
8 context that an affected jurisdiction may make and  
9 to edit their findings and recommendations with any  
10 useful additional information or context provided by  
11 any affected jurisdiction in its comments without af-  
12 fecting the integrity or independence of the review  
13 and its findings and recommendations, as the Board  
14 shall determine.

15 (e) DISPROPORTIONATELY IMPACTED COMMU-  
16 NITIES.—

17 (1) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out a review of  
18 an incident under this section, including in deter-  
19 mining whether to launch a review, the Board shall  
20 ensure the potential development of findings that  
21 would benefit the prevention of loss of life and  
22 human or economic injury to populations that are  
23 socially, medically, or economically vulnerable, as de-  
24 termined by the Board.



1           (2) DATA REQUIREMENT.—To forward the  
2 analysis and identification of trends of fatalities and  
3 injuries as a result of incidents, the Board shall pub-  
4 lish information regarding the number of fatalities  
5 and injuries, and the facts and circumstances sur-  
6 rounding them, disaggregated by race, color or eth-  
7 nicity, religion, nationality, sex, age, disability,  
8 English proficiency, occupation, or economic status,  
9 and other demographic characteristics that the  
10 Board may determine appropriate.

11           (f) COORDINATION WITH OTHER REVIEWS AND IN-  
12 VESTIGATIONS.—

13           (1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the requirements  
14 of this section, a review of a natural hazard incident  
15 by the Board under subsection (a)(1) shall have pri-  
16 ority over any investigation by another department,  
17 agency, or instrumentality of the Federal Govern-  
18 ment or a State, Tribal, or local government.

19           (2) PARTICIPATION BY OTHER AGENCIES.—The  
20 Board shall provide for appropriate participation by  
21 other departments, agencies, or instrumentalities in  
22 a review conducted by the Board, except that an-  
23 other department, agency, or instrumentality may  
24 not influence the final findings of the Board.

1           (3) COORDINATION.—The Board shall coordi-  
2           nate with all other Federal, State, Tribal, or local le-  
3           gally mandated investigations or reviews and may  
4           share information with those entities, according to  
5           policies and procedures that the Board will provide,  
6           to ensure that appropriate findings and rec-  
7           ommendations to reduce loss of life, injury, and eco-  
8           nomic injury caused by future incidents are pro-  
9           duced as efficiently as possible.

10           (4) MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING.—Not  
11           later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this  
12           Act, and biennially thereafter, the Chairman of the  
13           Board shall enter into memoranda of understanding  
14           with the Director of the National Institute of Stand-  
15           ards and Technology, the Administrator of the Fed-  
16           eral Emergency Management Agency, the Chairman  
17           of the Chemical Safety Board, and the Chairman of  
18           the National Transportation Safety Board, respec-  
19           tively, and may enter into additional memoranda of  
20           understanding with any other Federal entity that re-  
21           quests such due to the relationship that the require-  
22           ments of the Federal entity may have with the re-  
23           quirements with the Board, in order to—

1 (A) determine the appropriate roles and re-  
2 sponsibilities of the Board with respect to the  
3 other agency or board;

4 (B) avoid any duplication of effort; and

5 (C) ensure that appropriate findings and  
6 recommendations to reduce loss of life, injury,  
7 and economic injury caused by future incidents  
8 are provided.

9 (g) PARTICIPATION IN SUPPORT OF ANOTHER AGEN-  
10 CY.—

11 (1) IN GENERAL.—

12 (A) INVESTIGATION OF ACTS OF VIO-  
13 LENCE.—The Board may participate in an in-  
14 vestigation of an act of violence in support of  
15 another Federal department or agency, or other  
16 Federal investigative body with statutory au-  
17 thority to lead such an investigation, if the head  
18 of the lead investigative agency determines that  
19 the participation of the Board would be bene-  
20 ficial to reduce the likelihood of the loss of life  
21 and human or economic injury, for future simi-  
22 lar incidents.

23 (B) INVESTIGATION OF TECHNOLOGICAL  
24 INCIDENTS.—

1 (i) IN GENERAL.—The Board may  
2 participate in an investigation of a techno-  
3 logical incident—

4 (I) in support of another Federal  
5 department or agency, or other Fed-  
6 eral investigative body with statutory  
7 authority to lead such an investiga-  
8 tion, if the head of the lead investiga-  
9 tive agency determines that the par-  
10 ticipation of the Board would be bene-  
11 ficial to reduce the likelihood of the  
12 loss of life and human or economic in-  
13 jury, for future similar incidents; or

14 (II) in the case of no statutory  
15 authority for another Federal depart-  
16 ment or agency, or other Federal in-  
17 vestigative body, to lead such an in-  
18 vestigation, as the lead investigative  
19 entity.

20 (ii) MEMORANDA OF UNDER-  
21 STANDING.—Not later than 1 year after  
22 the date of enactment of this Act, and bi-  
23 ennially thereafter, the Chairman of the  
24 Board shall enter into memoranda of un-

1                   derstanding with the heads of appropriate  
2                   Federal agencies in order to—

3                   (I) determine the appropriate  
4                   roles and responsibilities of the Board  
5                   in investigating technological incidents  
6                   with respect to the other agency;

7                   (II) avoid any duplication of ef-  
8                   fort; and

9                   (III) ensure that appropriate  
10                  findings and recommendations to re-  
11                  duce loss of life, injury, and economic  
12                  injury caused by future incidents are  
13                  provided.

14                 (2) FINDINGS.—If the Board participates in an  
15                 act of violence or technological incident investigation  
16                 under paragraph (1)(A), the Board may issue inde-  
17                 pendent findings and recommendations notwith-  
18                 standing the outcome of any investigation conducted  
19                 by another Federal agency or other Federal inves-  
20                 tigative body.

21                 (3) CRIMINAL CIRCUMSTANCES.—If the Attor-  
22                 ney General, in consultation with the Chairperson,  
23                 determines and notifies the Board that cir-  
24                 cumstances reasonably indicate that the act of vio-  
25                 lence or technological incident described in para-

1 graph (1)(A) may have been caused by an inten-  
2 tional criminal act, the Board shall relinquish inves-  
3 tigative priority to the responsible Federal law en-  
4 forcement entity.

5 (4) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—This section  
6 shall not be construed to affect the authority of an-  
7 other department, agency, or instrumentality of the  
8 Federal Government to investigate an incident under  
9 applicable law or to obtain information directly from  
10 the parties involved in, and witnesses to, the inci-  
11 dent. The Board and other departments, agencies,  
12 and instrumentalities shall ensure that appropriate  
13 information developed about the incident is ex-  
14 changed in a timely manner.

15 (h) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—The Board may make  
16 the following types of technical assistance available to  
17 Federal, State, Tribal, and local government agencies and  
18 to private entities as designated by a Federal, State, Trib-  
19 al, or local government agency:

20 (1) INDEPENDENT REVIEW.—The Board shall  
21 disseminate best practices to develop disaster inves-  
22 tigation and review capacity within State, Tribal,  
23 and local governments.

24 (2) IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDA-  
25 TIONS.—The Board—

1           (A) may provide technical assistance to  
2           any entity identified as responsible for imple-  
3           menting a recommendation under section  
4           5(a)(1) to assist the entity in implementing the  
5           recommendation; and

6           (B) to the extent possible, shall provide the  
7           technical assistance described in subparagraph  
8           (A) in coordination with technical assistance of-  
9           fered by another Federal department or agency.

10          (3) PRIORITIZATION.—In offering technical as-  
11          sistance under this subsection, the Board shall use  
12          a risk-based method of prioritization, as the Board  
13          determines appropriate.

14          (i) FINDINGS.—

15               (1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in para-  
16               graph (2), not later than 1 year after the date on  
17               which the Board initiates a review conducted under  
18               this section, the Board shall make the findings and  
19               relevant underlying data of the review available to  
20               the public.

21               (2) EXTENSION OF DEADLINE.—The Chair-  
22               person of the Board may extend the 1-year period  
23               described in paragraph (1) if the Chairperson, before  
24               the end of such 1-year period—

1 (A) provides an explanation for the exten-  
2 sion; and

3 (B) makes available to the public all avail-  
4 able interim findings and underlying data.

5 **SEC. 5. RECOMMENDATIONS AND RESPONSES.**

6 (a) IN GENERAL.—If the Board issues a rec-  
7 ommendation about an incident, the Board shall—

8 (1) explain the relationship between any rec-  
9 ommendation and the results of a fact-finding re-  
10 view;

11 (2) identify each relevant entity responsible for  
12 making the change called for in the recommenda-  
13 tion, including State, local, or private entities, as ap-  
14 propriate;

15 (3) publish any responses to the recommenda-  
16 tion publicly; and

17 (4) assess whether the responses adequately  
18 lower the likelihood that a future similar incident  
19 will result in loss of life or human or economic in-  
20 jury in the view of the Board.

21 (b) FEDERAL RESPONSES TO RECOMMENDATIONS.—

22 (1) IN GENERAL.—All Federal departments and  
23 agencies identified in a recommendation made by the  
24 Board shall reply to the recommendations not later



1 than 90 days after the date on which the rec-  
2 ommendation is published by the Board.

3 (2) RESPONSE DESCRIBED.—A response under  
4 paragraph (1) made by a Federal department or  
5 agency shall include—

6 (A) whether the department or agency in-  
7 tends to adopt the recommendation in whole, in  
8 part, or not at all;

9 (B) an explanation of the reasons for only  
10 adopting the recommendation in part or not at  
11 all; and

12 (C) a proposed timetable for completing  
13 the action the Federal department or agency  
14 has agreed to.

15 (3) PROGRESS UPDATES.—A Federal depart-  
16 ment or agency that agrees to adopt a recommenda-  
17 tion of the Board shall—

18 (A) track the progress of the department  
19 or agency toward completion; and

20 (B) provide an update to the Board, to be  
21 published publicly, periodically, and not less fre-  
22 quently than annually.

23 (c) PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—

24 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after  
25 the date on which a final determination is made on

1 a recommendation under this section, the Board  
2 shall make a copy of the recommendation and re-  
3 sponse to the recommendation available to the pub-  
4 lic.

5 (2) EXTENSION OF DEADLINE.—The Chair-  
6 person of the Board may extend the 1-year period  
7 described in paragraph (1) if the Chairperson, before  
8 the end of such 1-year period—

9 (A) provides an explanation for the exten-  
10 sion; and

11 (B) makes available to the public any  
12 available interim response to the recommenda-  
13 tion and underlying data.

14 (d) DISSEMINATION.—The Board shall propagate  
15 each recommendation issued under this section, including  
16 by—

17 (1) incorporating the recommendation, and any  
18 related findings, into training material used by Fed-  
19 eral, State, Tribal, and private training facilities  
20 specializing in building resilience to and responding  
21 to and recovering from natural hazards, as the  
22 Board determines appropriate;

23 (2) coordinating with professional associations  
24 related to building resilience to and responding to  
25 and recovering from natural hazards;

1           (3) collaborating with relevant Federal, State,  
2           and Tribal authorities and private organizations;  
3           and

4           (4) coordinating with private and public institu-  
5           tions of higher education and research institutions.

6 **SEC. 6. REPORTS AND STUDIES.**

7           (a) STUDIES AND OTHER REPORTS.—

8           (1) IN GENERAL.—The Board shall annually  
9           submit a report containing the information described  
10          in paragraph (2) to—

11                   (A) Congress;

12                   (B) any department, agency, or instrumen-  
13                   tality of the Federal Government concerned  
14                   with natural hazards;

15                   (C) all State and Tribal governments; and

16                   (D) the general public.

17          (2) INFORMATION DESCRIBED.—The informa-  
18          tion described in this paragraph is—

19                   (A) the results of special studies on how to  
20                   reduce morbidity and mortality from incidents;

21                   (B) an examination of techniques and  
22                   methods of evaluating measures to protect the  
23                   public from incidents and periodically publish  
24                   recommended procedures for reviews;

1           (C) evaluation and examination of the ef-  
2           fectiveness of the findings of the Board about  
3           the natural hazard resilience of other depart-  
4           ments, agencies, and instrumentalities of the  
5           Federal Government and their effectiveness in  
6           preventing loss of life or human or economic in-  
7           jury; and

8           (D) recommend meaningful responses to  
9           reduce the likelihood of loss of life or human or  
10          economic injury, according to the findings of  
11          the research described in this subsection, in-  
12          cluding national and regional policies and pro-  
13          grams.

14          (b) BIENNIAL REPORT.—Not later than 2 years after  
15          the date of enactment of this Act, and once every 2 years  
16          thereafter, the Board shall submit a report to Congress,  
17          which shall include—

18               (1) a statistical and analytical summary of the  
19               reviews conducted and reviewed by the Board during  
20               the prior 2 calendar years;

21               (2) a survey and summary of the recommenda-  
22               tions made by the Board and the observed response  
23               to each recommendation, including the classification,  
24               containing a written justification and explanation of  
25               each recommendation as—

1           (A) open, if, in the determination of the  
2           Board, sufficient action to fulfill the intent of  
3           the recommendation has not been taken and  
4           still should be;

5           (B) closed, if, in the determination of the  
6           Board, sufficient action to fulfill the intent of  
7           the recommendation has been taken and no fur-  
8           ther action is necessary; and

9           (C) outdated, if, in the determination of  
10          the Board, the recommendation is no longer rel-  
11          evant because of any change in circumstances  
12          or actions by parties other than the intended  
13          recipient of the recommendation;

14          (3) an assessment of efforts of Federal, State,  
15          Tribal, and local governments to respond to rec-  
16          ommendations made by the Board, if such entities  
17          have voluntarily provided information to the Board  
18          on the progress of the entity;

19          (4) a description of the training undertaken by  
20          the Board and its staff and persons sponsored by  
21          the Board;

22          (5) a list of natural hazards that caused 10 or  
23          more fatalities that the Board did not review and a  
24          recommendation with justification by the Board of

1 whether similar incidents should be reviewed in the  
2 future;

3 (6) a recommendation on how, if at all, the  
4 thresholds and triggers for a review by the Board  
5 should change;

6 (7) an assessment of the sufficiency of Federal  
7 resources provided to State, Tribal, and local gov-  
8 ernments in aggregate relative to any vulnerabilities  
9 that the Board determines the governments have;

10 (8) a list of all requests for review from Gov-  
11 ernors of States and territories and chief executives  
12 of Tribal Governments or recommended by the office  
13 established under section 7(f)(2) that the Board re-  
14 jected, including comments and recommendations  
15 from the Board regarding whether similar incidents  
16 should be reviewed in the future; and

17 (9) a list of ongoing reviews that have exceeded  
18 the expected time allotted for completion by Board  
19 order and an explanation for the additional time re-  
20 quired to complete each such review.

21 (c) DISSEMINATION.—The Board shall propagate the  
22 information described in subsection (a)(2), including by—

23 (1) incorporating the information into training  
24 material used by Federal, State, Tribal, and private  
25 training facilities specializing in building resilience

1 to and responding to and recovering from natural  
2 hazards, as the Board determines appropriate;

3 (2) coordinating with professional associations  
4 related to building resilience to and responding to  
5 and recovering from natural hazards;

6 (3) collaborating with relevant Federal, State,  
7 and Tribal authorities and private organizations;  
8 and

9 (4) coordinating with private and public institu-  
10 tions of higher education and research institutions.

11 **SEC. 7. APPOINTMENT AND ORGANIZATION.**

12 (a) APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS.—

13 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Board shall be com-  
14 posed of 7 members, who shall, in accordance with  
15 paragraph (2) and subject to paragraph (3), be ap-  
16 pointed by the President, by and with the advice and  
17 consent of the Senate.

18 (2) PROCEDURE.—

19 (A) INITIAL APPOINTMENTS.—The Presi-  
20 dent shall, in consultation with the National  
21 Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medi-  
22 cine and relevant professional associations and  
23 leaders in the private sector, appoint the 7  
24 members of the Board from among a list of 14

1 individuals provided by both houses of Con-  
2 gress, of which—

3 (i) the majority leader of the Senate  
4 shall provide the names of 4 individuals;

5 (ii) the minority leader of the Senate  
6 shall provide the names of 3 individuals;

7 (iii) the Speaker of the House of Rep-  
8 resentatives shall provide the names of 4  
9 individuals; and

10 (iv) the minority leader of the House  
11 of Representatives shall provide the names  
12 of 3 individuals.

13 (B) SUBSEQUENT APPOINTMENTS.—Any  
14 vacancy of the Board shall be filled in the same  
15 manner as the original appointment.

16 (3) REQUIREMENTS.—Of the 7 members ap-  
17 pointed under paragraph (1)—

18 (A) not more than 4 members may be ap-  
19 pointed from the same political party;

20 (B) all members shall be appointed on the  
21 basis of technical qualification, professional  
22 standing, and demonstrated knowledge in emer-  
23 gency management, fire management, emer-  
24 gency medical services, public health, physical  
25 sciences, social science, behavioral science, or



1 architectural and engineering with post-disaster  
2 evaluation or building forensics expertise in  
3 their respective field;

4 (C) a minimum of 2 members shall have  
5 experience working at the State or municipal  
6 level in 1 of the fields described in subpara-  
7 graph (B); and

8 (D) a minimum of 2 members shall have  
9 demonstrated professional experience working  
10 with populations that have historically been  
11 more vulnerable to incidents because of their  
12 race, color, nationality, sex, age, disability,  
13 English proficiency, or economic status.

14 (b) TERMS OF OFFICE AND REMOVAL.—

15 (1) TERM OF OFFICE.—Except as provided in  
16 paragraph (2), the term of office of each member  
17 shall be 5 years.

18 (2) FILLING OF VACANCY.—An individual ap-  
19 pointed to fill a vacancy occurring before the expira-  
20 tion of the term for which the predecessor of that  
21 individual was appointed is appointed for the re-  
22 mainder of that term.

23 (3) CONTINUATION UNTIL SUCCESSOR IS AP-  
24 POINTED.—When the term of office of a member

1 ends, the member may continue to serve until a suc-  
2 cessor is appointed and confirmed.

3 (4) REMOVAL.—The President may remove a  
4 member only for inefficiency, neglect of duty, or  
5 malfeasance in office. Immediately upon removing a  
6 member of the Board, the President shall issue a  
7 public statement that details how the actions of the  
8 removed member met the criteria of this paragraph.

9 (c) CHAIRPERSON AND VICE CHAIRPERSON.—

10 (1) CHAIRPERSON.—The President shall des-  
11 ignate, by and with the advice and consent of the  
12 Senate, a member appointed under subsection (b) to  
13 serve as the Chairperson of the Board.

14 (2) VICE CHAIRPERSON.—The President shall  
15 designate a member appointed under subsection (b)  
16 to serve as the Vice Chairperson of the Board and  
17 if the Chairperson is absent or unable to serve, or  
18 if the position of Chairperson is vacant, the Vice  
19 Chairperson shall act as the Chairperson.

20 (3) TERM OF OFFICE.—The Chairperson and  
21 Vice Chairperson shall each serve in such position  
22 for a term of 3 years.

23 (d) DUTIES AND POWERS OF CHAIRPERSON.—

1           (1) IN GENERAL.—The Chairperson shall be the  
2 chief executive and administrative officer of the  
3 Board.

4           (2) POWERS.—Subject to the general policies  
5 and decisions of the Board, the Chairperson shall—

6               (A) appoint and supervise officers and em-  
7 ployees, other than regular and full-time em-  
8 ployees in the immediate offices of another  
9 member, necessary to carry out this Act;

10              (B) fix the pay of officers and employees  
11 necessary to carry out this Act;

12              (C) distribute business among the officers,  
13 employees, and administrative units of the  
14 Board; and

15              (D) supervise the expenditures of the  
16 Board.

17       (e) QUORUM.—

18           (1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraphs (2)  
19 and (3), 4 members of the Board shall constitute a  
20 quorum for purposes of carrying out the duties and  
21 powers of the Board, subject to the limitations in  
22 the remainder of this subsection.

23           (2) PARTY LIMITATION.—Not less than 1 rep-  
24 resentative from each party shall be present for a  
25 quorum to be established.

1           (3) CHAIRPERSON.—Either the Chairperson or  
2 Vice Chairperson shall be present for a quorum to  
3 be established.

4           (f) OFFICES.—

5           (1) IN GENERAL.—The Board shall establish  
6 such offices as are necessary to carry out this Act,  
7 which may include offices responsible for—

8                   (A) operations;

9                   (B) science and methodology;

10                   (C) review and evaluation;

11                   (D) communications;

12                   (E) external coordination; and

13                   (F) technical assistance.

14           (2) OFFICE FOR THE PROTECTION OF DIS-  
15 PROPORTIONATELY IMPACTED COMMUNITIES.—

16           (A) IN GENERAL.—The Board shall estab-  
17 lish an office to review and make recommenda-  
18 tions to mitigate and prevent the loss of life, or  
19 human or economic injury for vulnerable popu-  
20 lations, including populations that may be more  
21 vulnerable because of their race, color, religion,  
22 nationality, sex, age, disability, English pro-  
23 ficiency, economic status, or other demographic  
24 characteristic that the Board may determine  
25 appropriate.

1 (B) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The office estab-  
2 lished under paragraph (1) shall—

3 (i) provide recommendations to the  
4 Board for incidents to review in accordance  
5 with section 4(b)(4) that do not otherwise  
6 meet the requirements of section 4(b);

7 (ii) determine and maintain a list spe-  
8 cific demographic, economic, social, and  
9 health characteristics of populations that  
10 historically have shown to be disproportion-  
11 ately impacted by incidents;

12 (iii) during a review conducted by the  
13 Board, provide research and analysis on  
14 how the incident impacts populations that  
15 the Office determines to be disproportion-  
16 ately impacted;

17 (iv) provide recommendations for each  
18 review conducted by the Board and for  
19 each report developed under section 6 on  
20 actions that can be taken to reduce the im-  
21 pact to populations that are found to be  
22 disproportionately impacted under clause  
23 (ii); and

24 (v) provide training, and establish  
25 training requirements, for Board members

1                   and staff in the fields of diversity, inclu-  
2                   sion, and equity in consultation with orga-  
3                   nizations specializing in those fields.

4                   (3) REGIONAL OFFICES.—In establishing offices  
5                   under this subsection, the Board may establish re-  
6                   gional offices across the United States to facilitate  
7                   collaboration, coordination, and the dissemination of  
8                   findings, recommendations, and best practices to  
9                   State, Tribal, and local governments and the private  
10                  sector in such regions as the Board determines ap-  
11                  propriate.

12                  (4) PURPOSE.—Each office established under  
13                  this subsection shall enable the Board to review, re-  
14                  port on, and issue recommendations to prevent the  
15                  loss of life, human injury, and economic injury and  
16                  deliver technical assistance to disseminate best prac-  
17                  tices in accordance with this Act.

18                  (g) CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER.—The Chairperson  
19                  shall designate an officer or employee of the Board to  
20                  serve as the Chief Financial Officer, who shall—

21                         (1) report directly to the Chairperson on finan-  
22                         cial management and budget execution;

23                         (2) direct, manage, and provide policy guidance  
24                         and oversight on financial management and property  
25                         and inventory control; and

1           (3) review the fees, rents, and other charges im-  
2           posed by the Board for services and things of value  
3           it provides and suggest appropriate revisions to  
4           those charges to reflect costs incurred by the Board  
5           in providing those services and things of value.

6           (h) BOARD MEMBER STAFF.—

7           (1) IN GENERAL.—Each member of the Board  
8           shall appoint and supervise regular and full-time em-  
9           ployees in the immediate office of the member as  
10          long as any such employee has been approved for  
11          employment by the designated agency ethics official  
12          under the same guidelines that apply to all employ-  
13          ees of the Board.

14          (2) DESIGNATION.—With respect to an indi-  
15          vidual appointed under paragraph (1)—

16                 (A) the member of the Board making the  
17                 appointment shall determine which grade of the  
18                 General Schedule most closely corresponds with  
19                 respect to the duties and functions of the posi-  
20                 tion to which the individual is appointed; and

21                 (B) during the period of the appoint-  
22                 ment—

23                         (i) the individual shall be compensated  
24                         at the appropriate rate of pay for the  
25                         grade of the General Schedule with respect

1 to which the determination is made under  
2 subparagraph (A); and

3 (ii) for the purposes of title 5, United  
4 States Code, and the rules issued under  
5 that title, the individual shall be considered  
6 to be an employee, as that term is defined  
7 in section 5331(a) of title 5, United States  
8 Code.

9 (3) LIMITATION.—Except for the Chairperson,  
10 the appointment authority in paragraph (1) shall be  
11 limited to the number of full-time equivalent posi-  
12 tions, in addition to 1 senior professional staff posi-  
13 tion at a level not to exceed the GS–15 level of the  
14 General Schedule and 1 administrative staff posi-  
15 tion, allocated to each member of the Board through  
16 the annual budget and allocation process of the  
17 Board.

18 (i) DETAILED STAFF.—

19 (1) FEDERAL EMPLOYEES.—

20 (A) IN GENERAL.—Upon request of the  
21 Board, the head of an agency described in sub-  
22 paragraph (B), or any other Federal depart-  
23 ment or agency that the Board may request,  
24 may detail, on a reimbursable basis, any of the  
25 personnel of that department or agency to the



1 Board to assist the Board in carrying out the  
2 duties of the Board under this Act.

3 (B) RELEVANT AGENCIES.—For purposes  
4 of subparagraph (A), the following are agencies  
5 described in this subparagraph:

6 (i) The Federal Emergency Manage-  
7 ment Agency.

8 (ii) The Cybersecurity and Infrastruc-  
9 ture Security Agency of the Department of  
10 Homeland Security.

11 (iii) The National Oceanic and Atmos-  
12 pheric Administration, including the Na-  
13 tional Weather Service.

14 (iv) The Department of Defense, in-  
15 cluding the Army Corps of Engineers.

16 (v) The Department of Health and  
17 Human Services.

18 (vi) The National Institutes of  
19 Health.

20 (vii) The Centers for Disease Control  
21 and Prevention.

22 (viii) The Coast Guard.

23 (ix) The National Transportation  
24 Safety Board.

1 (x) The National Institute of Stand-  
2 ards and Technology.

3 (xi) The Government Accountability  
4 Office.

5 (xii) The Department of the Interior,  
6 including the United States Geological  
7 Survey.

8 (xiii) Any Office of the Inspector Gen-  
9 eral.

10 (xiv) The Small Business Administra-  
11 tion.

12 (xv) The Chemical Safety and Hazard  
13 Investigation Board.

14 (xvi) The Department of Housing and  
15 Urban Development.

16 (xvii) The Department of Agriculture.

17 (2) STATE, LOCAL, TRIBAL, AND RESEARCH  
18 STAFF.—

19 (A) IN GENERAL.—The Board may enter  
20 into agreements with State, local, and Tribal  
21 governments and relevant nonprofit institutions  
22 of higher education and research institutions to  
23 request staff, with specialized experience that  
24 the Board determines relevant, to be detailed to  
25 the Board, on a reimbursable basis, and shall

1           consult with relevant associations and organiza-  
2           tions of those entities in developing an efficient  
3           process for requesting and receiving detailed  
4           staff.

5                   (B) COMPENSATION.—The Board shall en-  
6           sure that any staff members detailed to the  
7           Board under this paragraph are compensated  
8           equitably and shall pay differences in salaries  
9           based on the experience of said staff and in  
10          consultation with the Office of Personnel Man-  
11          agement.

12                   (3) TERM OF DETAIL.—Any staff member de-  
13          tailed to the Board under this section shall be de-  
14          tailed for a term of 1 year and such detail may be  
15          extended for not more than 2 1-year terms.

16                   (4) LIMITATIONS.—Under this subsection—

17                           (A) not more than 25 percent of the total  
18                   number of staff members working for the  
19                   Board at any time may be detailees or other-  
20                   wise nonpermanent staff;

21                           (B) a detailee shall serve as an adviser or  
22                   supplemental professional staff in any office es-  
23                   tablished by the Board under subsection (g);  
24                   and

25                           (C) a detailee may not—

1 (i) determine any final findings or rec-  
2 ommendations; and

3 (ii) be the sole decisionmaker in re-  
4 view or evaluation methodologies.

5 (j) SEAL.—The Board shall have a seal that shall be  
6 judicially recognized.

7 (k) OPEN MEETINGS.—

8 (1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in para-  
9 graph (2), the Board shall be considered an agency  
10 for purposes of section 552b of title 5, United States  
11 Code.

12 (2) NONPUBLIC COLLABORATIVE DISCUS-  
13 SIONS.—

14 (A) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding sec-  
15 tion 552b of title 5, United States Code, a ma-  
16 jority of the members may hold a meeting that  
17 is not open to public observation to discuss offi-  
18 cial agency business if—

19 (i) no formal or informal vote or other  
20 official agency action is taken at the meet-  
21 ing;

22 (ii) each individual present at the  
23 meeting is a member or an employee of the  
24 Board;

1 (iii) at least 1 member of the Board  
2 from each political party is present at the  
3 meeting, if applicable;

4 (iv) the General Counsel of the Board  
5 is present at the meeting; and

6 (v) the records of the meeting, includ-  
7 ing the names of the individuals in attend-  
8 ance, time, place, and summary to be as  
9 thorough as the Board determines to be  
10 prudent, are posted publicly and online.

11 (B) DISCLOSURE OF NONPUBLIC COLLABO-  
12 RATIVE DISCUSSIONS.—Except as provided  
13 under subparagraphs (C) and (D), not later  
14 than 2 business days after the conclusion of a  
15 meeting under subparagraph (A), the Board  
16 shall make available to the public, in a place  
17 easily accessible to the public—

18 (i) a list of the individuals present at  
19 the meeting; and

20 (ii) a summary of the matters, includ-  
21 ing key issues, discussed at the meeting,  
22 except for any matter the Board properly  
23 determines may be withheld from the pub-  
24 lic under section 552b(e) of title 5, United  
25 States Code.

1           (C) SUMMARY.—If the Board properly de-  
2 termines a matter may be withheld from the  
3 public under section 552b(c) of title 5, United  
4 States Code, the Board shall provide a sum-  
5 mary with as much general information as pos-  
6 sible on each matter withheld from the public.

7           (D) ACTIVE REVIEWS.—If a discussion  
8 under subparagraph (A) directly relates to an  
9 active review, the Board shall make the dislo-  
10 sure under subparagraph (B) on the date the  
11 Board adopts the final report.

12           (E) PRESERVATION OF OPEN MEETINGS  
13 REQUIREMENTS FOR AGENCY ACTION.—Noth-  
14 ing in this paragraph may be construed to limit  
15 the applicability of section 552b of title 5,  
16 United States Code, with respect to a meeting  
17 of the members, other than the limitations de-  
18 scribed in this paragraph.

19           (F) STATUTORY CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing  
20 in this paragraph may be construed—

21           (i) to limit the applicability of section  
22 552b of title 5, United States Code, with  
23 respect to any information which is pro-  
24 posed to be withheld from the public under  
25 subparagraph (B)(ii); or

1 (ii) to authorize the Board to withhold  
2 from any individual any record that is ac-  
3 cessible to that individual under section  
4 552a of title 5, United States Code.

5 **SEC. 8. METHODOLOGY.**

6 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Board shall conduct each re-  
7 view, issue each recommendation, develop each report, and  
8 deliver all technical assistance authorized under this Act  
9 using methods that are in accordance with relevant profes-  
10 sional best practices, including best practices issued by  
11 analogous review organizations, academia, and govern-  
12 ment and private organizations.

13 (b) REQUIRED REVIEW.—The Board shall—

14 (1) review, on a regular basis, the methodolo-  
15 gies of the Board; and

16 (2) update the methodologies of the Board in  
17 accordance with the findings of each review con-  
18 ducted under paragraph (1).

19 (c) REQUIREMENT.—In establishing the methodolo-  
20 gies of the Board under this section, the Board shall incor-  
21 porate all relevant information from relevant Federal,  
22 State, and local entities, including past experience with  
23 similar incidents, exercises, risk assessments, and all other  
24 past research and analysis.

1           (d) TRANSPARENCY.—The Chairperson shall include  
2 with each review report in which a recommendation is  
3 issued by the Board a methodology section detailing the  
4 process and information underlying the selection of each  
5 recommendation.

6           (e) ELEMENTS.—Except as provided under sub-  
7 section (f), the methodology section under subsection (d)  
8 shall include, for each recommendation—

9                   (1) a brief summary of the Board’s collection  
10 and analysis of the specific information most rel-  
11 evant to the recommendation;

12                   (2) a description of the Board’s use of external  
13 information, including studies, reports, and experts,  
14 other than the findings of a specific review, if any  
15 were used to inform or support the recommendation,  
16 including a brief summary of the specific resilience  
17 benefits and other effects identified by each study,  
18 report, or expert; and

19                   (3) a brief summary of actions, including im-  
20 portant examples, taken by regulated entities before  
21 the publication of the recommendation, to the extent  
22 such actions are known to the Board, that were con-  
23 sistent with the recommendation.

24           (f) SAVINGS CLAUSE.—



1           (1) IN GENERAL.—Nothing in this section may  
2 be construed—

3           (A) to delay publication of the findings,  
4 cause, or probable cause of a Board review;

5           (B) to delay the issuance of an urgent rec-  
6 ommendation that the Board has determined  
7 must be issued to avoid immediate death or  
8 human or economic injury; or

9           (C) to limit the number of examples the  
10 Board may consider before issuing a rec-  
11 ommendation.

12           (2) LIMITATION.—Notwithstanding paragraph  
13 (1), the Board shall publish the methodology re-  
14 quired under this section not later than 30 days  
15 after the date on which the review is initially pub-  
16 lished.

17 **SEC. 9. ADMINISTRATIVE.**

18           (a) AUTHORITY.—

19           (1) IN GENERAL.—The Board, and when au-  
20 thorized by the Board, a member of the Board, an  
21 administrative law judge employed by or assigned to  
22 the Board, or an officer or employee designated by  
23 the Chairperson, may conduct hearings to carry out  
24 this Act, administer oaths, and require, by subpoena  
25 or otherwise, necessary witnesses and evidence.

1           (2) SUBPOENA AUTHORITY.—A witness or evi-  
2           dence in a hearing under paragraph (1) may be  
3           summoned or required to be produced from any  
4           place in the United States to the designated place of  
5           the hearing. A witness summoned under this sub-  
6           section is entitled to the same fee and mileage the  
7           witness would have been paid in a court of the  
8           United States.

9           (3) REQUIREMENT.—A subpoena shall be  
10          issued under the signature of the Chairperson or the  
11          Chairperson’s designee, but may be served by any  
12          person designated by the Chairperson.

13          (4) ENFORCEMENT.—If a person disobeys a  
14          subpoena, order, or inspection notice of the Board,  
15          the Board may bring a civil action in a district court  
16          of the United States to enforce the subpoena, order,  
17          or notice. An action under this paragraph may be  
18          brought in the judicial district in which the person  
19          against whom the action is brought resides, is found,  
20          or does business. The court may punish a failure to  
21          obey an order of the court to comply with the sub-  
22          poena, order, or notice as a contempt of court.

23          (b) ADDITIONAL POWERS.—The Board may—

1           (1) procure the temporary or intermittent serv-  
2           ices of experts or consultants under section 3109 of  
3           title 5, United States Code;

4           (2) make agreements and other transactions  
5           necessary to carry out this Act without regard to  
6           subsections (b), (c), and (d) of section 6101 of title  
7           41, United States Code;

8           (3) use, when appropriate, available services,  
9           equipment, personnel, and facilities of a department,  
10          agency, or instrumentality of the United States Gov-  
11          ernment on a reimbursable or other basis;

12          (4) confer with employees and use services,  
13          records, and facilities of State and local govern-  
14          mental authorities;

15          (5) appoint advisory committees composed of  
16          qualified private citizens and officials of the Federal  
17          Government and State and local governments as ap-  
18          propriate;

19          (6) accept voluntary and uncompensated serv-  
20          ices notwithstanding any other law;

21          (7) make contracts with private entities to carry  
22          out studies related to duties and powers of the  
23          Board; and

24          (8) negotiate and enter into agreements with  
25          individuals and private entities and departments,

1 agencies, and instrumentalities of the Federal Gov-  
2 ernment, State, Tribal, and local governments, and  
3 governments of foreign countries for the provision of  
4 facilities, technical services, or training in research  
5 theory and techniques, and require that such entities  
6 provide appropriate consideration for the reasonable  
7 costs of any facilities, goods, services, or training  
8 provided by the Board.

9 (c) COLLECTION OF FUNDS.—The Board shall de-  
10 posit into the Treasury of the United States amounts re-  
11 ceived under subsection (b)(8) to be credited as offsetting  
12 collections to the appropriation of the Board. The Board  
13 shall maintain an annual record of collections received  
14 under subsection (b)(8).

15 (d) SUBMISSION OF CERTAIN COPIES TO CON-  
16 GRESS.—

17 (1) IN GENERAL.—When the Board submits to  
18 the President or the Director of the Office of Man-  
19 agement and Budget a budget estimate, budget re-  
20 quest, supplemental budget estimate, other budget  
21 information, a legislative recommendation, prepared  
22 testimony for congressional hearings, or comments  
23 on legislation, the Board shall submit a copy to Con-  
24 gress at the same time.

1           (2) LIMITATION.—An officer, department,  
2           agency, or instrumentality of the Federal Govern-  
3           ment may not require the Board to submit the esti-  
4           mate, request, information, recommendation, testi-  
5           mony, or comments to another officer, department,  
6           agency, or instrumentality of the Federal Govern-  
7           ment for approval, comment, or review before being  
8           submitted to Congress.

9           (3) BUDGET PROCESS.—The Board shall de-  
10          velop and approve a process for the Board’s review  
11          and comment or approval of documents submitted to  
12          the President, the Director of the Office of Manage-  
13          ment and Budget, or Congress under this sub-  
14          section.

15          (e) LIAISON COMMITTEES.—The Chairperson may  
16          determine the number of committees that are appropriate  
17          to maintain effective liaison with other departments, agen-  
18          cies, and instrumentalities of the Federal Government,  
19          State and local governmental authorities, and independent  
20          standard-setting authorities that carry out programs and  
21          activities related to its work. The Board may designate  
22          representatives to serve on or assist those committees.

23          (f) INQUIRIES.—The Board, or an officer or employee  
24          of the Board designated by the Chairperson, may conduct  
25          an inquiry to obtain information related to natural hazard

1 safety after publishing notice of the inquiry in the Federal  
2 Register. The Board or designated officer or employee  
3 may require by order a department, agency, or instrumen-  
4 tality of the Federal Government, a State, Tribal, or local  
5 governmental authority, or a person transporting individ-  
6 uals or property in commerce to submit to the Board a  
7 written report and answers to requests and questions re-  
8 lated to a duty or power of the Board. The Board may  
9 prescribe the time within which the report and answers  
10 must be given to the Board or to the designated officer  
11 or employee. Copies of the report and answers shall be  
12 made available for public inspection.

13 (g) REGULATIONS.—The Board may prescribe regu-  
14 lations to carry out this Act.

15 (h) OVERTIME PAY.—

16 (1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the requirements  
17 of this section and notwithstanding paragraphs (1)  
18 and (2) of section 5542(a) of title 5, United States  
19 Code, for an employee of the Board whose basic pay  
20 is at a rate which equals or exceeds the minimum  
21 rate of basic pay for GS–10 of the General Schedule,  
22 the Board may establish an overtime hourly rate of  
23 pay for the employee with respect to work performed  
24 in the field (including travel to or from) and other  
25 work that is critical to a review in an amount equal

1 to one and one-half times the hourly rate of basic  
2 pay of the employee. All of such amount shall be  
3 considered to be premium pay.

4 (2) LIMITATION ON OVERTIME PAY TO AN EM-  
5 PLOYEE.—An employee of the Board may not re-  
6 ceive overtime pay under paragraph (1), for work  
7 performed in a calendar year, in an amount that ex-  
8 ceeds 25 percent of the annual rate of basic pay of  
9 the employee for such calendar year.

10 (3) BASIC PAY DEFINED.—In this subsection,  
11 the term “basic pay” includes any applicable local-  
12 ity-based comparability payment under section 5304  
13 of title 5, United States Code (or similar provision  
14 of law), and any special rate of pay under section  
15 5305 of such title 5 (or similar provision of law).

16 (4) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than 2 years  
17 after the date of enactment of this Act, and annually  
18 thereafter, the Board shall transmit to Congress a  
19 report identifying the total amount of overtime pay-  
20 ments made under this subsection in the preceding  
21 fiscal year, and the number of employees whose  
22 overtime pay under this subsection was limited in  
23 that fiscal year as a result of the 25 percent limit  
24 established by paragraph (2).

25 (i) ENTRY AND INSPECTION.—

1           (1) IN GENERAL.—An officer or employee of  
2 the Board, on display of appropriate credentials and  
3 written notice of authority, may—

4           (A) enter an area where an incident has  
5 occurred;

6           (B) take such actions as are necessary to  
7 conduct a review under this section, so long as  
8 the actions do not interfere with ongoing life-  
9 saving and life-sustaining operations; and

10          (C) during reasonable hours, inspect any  
11 record, including an electronic record, process,  
12 control, or facility related to an incident under  
13 this Act.

14          (2) REQUIREMENT.—The Board shall use ut-  
15 most discretion to prevent interference with ongoing  
16 response efforts, including by developing review pro-  
17 cedures with input from relevant authorities nation-  
18 wide.

19 **SEC. 10. DISCLOSURE, AVAILABILITY, AND USE OF INFOR-**  
20 **MATION.**

21          (a) DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION.—

22           (1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in sub-  
23 sections (b), (c), (d), and (f), a copy of a record, in-  
24 formation, or review submitted or received by the



1 Board, or a member or employee of the Board, shall  
2 be posted publicly.

3 (2) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this  
4 subsection shall be construed to require the release  
5 of information described in section 552(b) of title 5,  
6 United States Code, or protected from disclosure by  
7 another law of the United States.

8 (b) TRADE SECRETS.—

9 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Board may disclose in-  
10 formation related to a trade secret referred to in sec-  
11 tion 1905 of title 18, United States Code, only—

12 (A) to another department, agency, or in-  
13 strumentality of the United States Government  
14 when requested for official use;

15 (B) to a committee of Congress having ju-  
16 risdiction over the subject matter to which the  
17 information is related, when requested by that  
18 committee;

19 (C) in a judicial proceeding under a court  
20 order that preserves the confidentiality of the  
21 information without impairing the proceeding;  
22 and

23 (D) to the public to protect health and  
24 safety after giving notice to any interested per-  
25 son to whom the information is related and an

1 opportunity for that person to comment in writ-  
2 ing, or orally in closed session, on the proposed  
3 disclosure, if the delay resulting from notice  
4 and opportunity for comment would not be det-  
5 rimental to health and safety.

6 (2) REQUIREMENT.—Information disclosed  
7 under paragraph (1) may be disclosed only in a way  
8 designed to preserve its confidentiality.

9 (3) PROTECTION OF VOLUNTARY SUBMISSION  
10 OF INFORMATION.—Notwithstanding any other pro-  
11 vision of law, neither the Board, nor any agency re-  
12 ceiving information from the Board, shall disclose  
13 voluntarily provided safety-related information if  
14 that information is not related to the exercise of the  
15 Board’s review authority under this Act and if the  
16 Board finds that the disclosure of the information  
17 would inhibit the voluntary provision of that type of  
18 information.

19 (c) RECORDINGS AND TRANSCRIPTS.—

20 (1) CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDINGS.—Ex-  
21 cept as provided in paragraph (2), the Board may  
22 not disclose publicly any part of an original record-  
23 ing or transcript of oral communications or original  
24 and contemporary written communications between

1 Federal, State, Tribal, or local officials responding  
2 to an incident under review by the Board.

3 (2) EXCEPTION.—Subject to subsection (b), the  
4 Board shall make public any part of a transcript,  
5 any written depiction of visual information obtained  
6 from an audio or video recording, or any still image  
7 obtained from a recording the Board decides is rel-  
8 evant to the incident—

9 (A) if the Board holds a public hearing on  
10 the incident at the time of the hearing; or

11 (B) if the Board does not hold a public  
12 hearing, at the time a majority of the other fac-  
13 tual reports on the incident are placed in the  
14 public docket.

15 (3) REFERENCES TO INFORMATION IN MAKING  
16 SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS.—This subsection shall  
17 not prevent the Board from referring at any time to  
18 recorded or written information in making safety  
19 recommendations.

20 (d) FOREIGN REVIEWS.—

21 (1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other  
22 provision of law, neither the Board, nor any agency  
23 receiving information from the Board, shall disclose  
24 records or information relating to its participation in  
25 foreign incident review, except that—

1           (A) the Board shall release records per-  
2           taining to such a review when the country con-  
3           ducting the review issues its final report or 2  
4           years following the date of the incident, which-  
5           ever occurs first; and

6           (B) the Board may disclose records and in-  
7           formation when authorized to do so by the  
8           country conducting the review.

9           (2) SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS.—Nothing in  
10          this subsection shall restrict the Board at any time  
11          from referring to foreign review information in mak-  
12          ing safety recommendations.

13          (e) PRIVACY PROTECTIONS.—Before making public  
14          any still image obtained from a video recorder under sub-  
15          section (c)(2) or subsection (d)(2), the Board shall take  
16          such action as appropriate to protect from public disclo-  
17          sure any information that readily identifies an individual,  
18          including a decedent.

19          **SEC. 11. TRAINING.**

20          (a) USE OF TRAINING FACILITIES.—The Board may  
21          use, on a reimbursable basis, the services of any training  
22          facility of the Federal Government, including those oper-  
23          ated by the Department of Homeland Security, the De-  
24          partment of Health and Human Services, and the Depart-  
25          ment of Commerce. The responsible department or agency

1 shall make such training facility and any relevant training  
2 course available to—

3 (1) the Board for safety training of employees  
4 of the Board in carrying out their duties and pow-  
5 ers; and

6 (2) other relevant personnel of the United  
7 States Government, State and local governments,  
8 governments of foreign countries, interstate authori-  
9 ties, and private organizations the Board designates  
10 in consultation with the relevant departments and  
11 agencies.

12 (b) FEES.—Training shall be provided at a reason-  
13 able fee established periodically by the Board in consulta-  
14 tion with the relevant departments and agencies. The fee  
15 shall be paid directly to the relevant departments and  
16 agencies, and shall be deposited in the Treasury.

17 (c) TRAINING OF BOARD EMPLOYEES AND OTH-  
18 ERS.—The Board may conduct training of its employees  
19 in those subjects necessary for proper performance. The  
20 Board may also authorize attendance at courses given  
21 under this subsection by other government personnel, per-  
22 sonnel of foreign governments, and personnel from indus-  
23 try or otherwise who have a requirement for training. The  
24 Board may require non-Board personnel to reimburse  
25 some or all of the training costs, and amounts so reim-

1 bursed shall be credited to the appropriation of the Board  
2 as offsetting collections.

3 **SEC. 12. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be appro-  
5 priated, to remain available until expended, for the pur-  
6 poses of this Act—

7 (1) \$25,000,000 for fiscal year 2024;

8 (2) \$40,000,000 for fiscal year 2025;

9 (3) \$50,000,000 for fiscal year 2026; and

10 (4) \$60,000,000 for fiscal year 2027.

11 (b) FEES, REFUNDS, AND REIMBURSEMENTS.—

12 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Board may impose and  
13 collect such fees, refunds, and reimbursements as it  
14 determines to be appropriate for services provided by  
15 or through the Board.

16 (2) RECEIPTS CREDITED AS OFFSETTING COL-  
17 LECTIONS.—Notwithstanding section 3302 of title  
18 31, United States Code, any fee, refund, or reim-  
19 bursement collected under this subsection—

20 (A) shall be credited as offsetting collec-  
21 tions to the account that finances the activities  
22 and services for which the fee is imposed or  
23 with which the refund or reimbursement is as-  
24 sociated;

1 (B) shall be available for expenditure only  
2 to pay the costs of activities and services for  
3 which the fee is imposed or with which the re-  
4 fund or reimbursement is associated; and

5 (C) shall remain available until expended.

6 (3) REFUNDS.—The Board may refund any fee  
7 paid by mistake or any amount paid in excess of  
8 that required.

9 **SEC. 13. AUTHORITY OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL.**

10 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Inspector General of the De-  
11 partment of Homeland Security, in accordance with the  
12 mission of the Inspector General to prevent and detect  
13 fraud and abuse, shall have authority to review only the  
14 financial management, property management, and busi-  
15 ness operations of the Board, including internal account-  
16 ing and administrative control systems, to determine com-  
17 pliance with applicable Federal laws, rules, and regula-  
18 tions.

19 (b) DUTIES.—In carrying out this section, the In-  
20 spector General of the Department of Homeland Security  
21 shall—

22 (1) keep the Chairperson of the Board and  
23 Congress fully and currently informed about prob-  
24 lems relating to administration of the internal ac-

1 counting and administrative control systems of the  
2 Board;

3 (2) issue findings and recommendations for ac-  
4 tions to address such problems; and

5 (3) report periodically to Congress on any  
6 progress made in implementing actions to address  
7 such problems.

8 (c) ACCESS TO INFORMATION.—In carrying out this  
9 section, the Inspector General of the Department of  
10 Homeland Security may exercise authorities granted to  
11 the Inspector General under subsections (a) and (b) of sec-  
12 tion 406 of title 5, United States Code.

13 (d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

14 (1) FUNDING.—There are authorized to be ap-  
15 propriated to the Secretary of Homeland Security  
16 for use by the Inspector General of the Department  
17 of Homeland Security such sums as may be nec-  
18 essary to cover expenses associated with activities  
19 pursuant to the authority exercised under this sec-  
20 tion.

21 (2) REIMBURSABLE AGREEMENT.—In the ab-  
22 sence of an appropriation under this subsection for  
23 an expense referred to in paragraph (1), the Inspec-  
24 tor General and the Board shall have a reimbursable  
25 agreement to cover such expense.



1 **SEC. 14. EVALUATION AND AUDIT OF NATIONAL DISASTER**  
2 **SAFETY BOARD.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—As determined necessary by the  
4 Comptroller General of the United States or the appro-  
5 priate congressional committees, but not less frequently  
6 than once every 2 years, the Comptroller General of the  
7 United States shall evaluate and audit the programs and  
8 expenditures of the Board in order to promote economy,  
9 efficiency, and effectiveness in the administration of the  
10 programs, operations, and activities of the Board.

11 (b) RESPONSIBILITY OF COMPTROLLER GENERAL.—  
12 In carrying out subsection (a), the Comptroller General  
13 of the United States shall evaluate and audit the pro-  
14 grams, operations, and activities of the Board, including—

15 (1) information management and security, in-  
16 cluding privacy protection of personally identifiable  
17 information;

18 (2) the resource levels of the Board and man-  
19 agement of such resources relative to the mission of  
20 the Board;

21 (3) workforce development;

22 (4) procurement and contracting planning,  
23 practices, and policies;

24 (5) the process and procedures to select an inci-  
25 dent to review;

1           (6) the extent to which the Board follows lead-  
2           ing practices in selected management areas;

3           (7) the extent to which the Board addresses  
4           management challenges in completing reviews;

5           (8) the extent to which the evaluation, review,  
6           and recommendation-issuing methodologies of the  
7           Board are consistent with established best practice,  
8           as determined by the Comptroller General of the  
9           United States; and

10          (9) an impact evaluation of the work of the  
11          Board, using the purposes and intent described in  
12          this Act and by the Board, against the realized re-  
13          sults of the Board, according to a methodology de-  
14          termined by the Comptroller General of the United  
15          States, conducted in a manner that is not overly dis-  
16          ruptive to the work of the Board.

○