

116TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. 1709

To direct the Secretary of Transportation to establish a grant program to improve evacuation routes in rural communities, and for other purposes.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 4, 2019

Mr. JONES (for himself, Mr. KENNEDY, and Mr. CASSIDY) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Environment and Public Works

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## A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Transportation to establish a grant program to improve evacuation routes in rural communities, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Bolstering Emergency  
5 routes to Save Americans From Extreme weather Act of  
6 2019” or the “BE SAFE Act of 2019”.

7 **SEC. 2. EVACUATION ROUTE PROGRAM.**

8 (a) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this Act is to estab-  
9 lish a competitive grant program that would improve

1 emergency evacuation routes in small and rural commu-  
2 nities through—

3           (1) the construction of State and local con-  
4 nector roads that facilitate access to broader thor-  
5 oughfares, such as Federal highways; and

6           (2) the improvement or expansion of existing  
7 roads and bridges where traffic congestion is a con-  
8 cern for the safe and efficient evacuation of small  
9 communities and rural counties in the event of ex-  
10 treme weather events, such as hurricanes, wildfires,  
11 and flooding.

12           (b) ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM.—The Secretary  
13 of Transportation, acting through the Administrator of  
14 the Federal Highway Administration (referred to in this  
15 Act as the “Secretary”), shall establish a competitive  
16 grant program in accordance with this section to provide  
17 grants to eligible entities described in subsection (c) for  
18 transportation infrastructure projects in rural counties  
19 that connect small communities to broader thoroughfares  
20 and evacuation routes that are essential for supporting  
21 mass evacuations caused by emergency weather events.

22           (c) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—The Secretary may award  
23 a grant under this section to any of the following entities:

24           (1) A State.

1           (2) A regional planning organization or eco-  
2           nomic development authority.

3           (3) A unit of local government.

4           (4) A political subdivision of a State or unit of  
5           local government.

6           (5) A special purpose district or public author-  
7           ity with a transportation function, including a port  
8           authority or airport.

9           (6) A Federal land management agency that  
10          applies for the grant jointly with a State or group  
11          of States.

12          (7) A Tribal government or a consortium of  
13          Tribal governments.

14          (d) ELIGIBLE PROJECTS.—The Secretary may award  
15          a grant under this section for a project—

16               (1) in an area that is—

17                       (A) within a city or county with a popu-  
18                       lation of less than 200,000 individuals; and

19                       (B) frequently impacted by extreme weath-  
20                       er events and related hazards, as designated by  
21                       the Administrator of the Federal Emergency  
22                       Management Agency; and

23               (2)(A) to build new connector roads;

24                       (B) to improve or expand existing roads that  
25                       are inadequate for efficient evacuation;

1           (C) to expand 2-lane bridges that require ex-  
2           pansion for efficient evacuation;

3           (D) to extend existing highways to connect to  
4           the Interstate System (as defined in section 101(a)  
5           of title 23, United States Code), more directly; or

6           (E) to connect State and local roads and high-  
7           ways to evacuation routes in adjacent States.

8           (e) MAXIMUM AMOUNT.—The Secretary may award  
9           a grant under this section in an amount that is not greater  
10          than \$100,000,000.

11          (f) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There  
12          are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary such  
13          sums as are necessary to carry out this section.

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