

119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 5018

To approve certain requests for a major disaster declaration, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 16, 2026

Mr. REED (for himself and Mr. WHITEHOUSE) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

A BILL

To approve certain requests for a major disaster declaration, 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 “Disaster Relief Fair-
5 ness Act of 2026”.

6 **SEC. 2. APPROVAL OF MAJOR DISASTER DECLARATION RE-**
7 **QUESTS.**

8 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

1 (1) COVERED PERIOD.—The term “covered pe-
 2 riod” means the period beginning on January 20,
 3 2025, and ending on January 20, 2029.

4 (2) COVERED REQUEST.—The term “covered
 5 request” means a request for a declaration by the
 6 President that a major disaster exists that is sub-
 7 mitted by the Governor of a State or a Chief Execu-
 8 tive of an Indian tribal government under section
 9 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and
 10 Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5170) during
 11 the covered period.

12 (3) GOVERNOR; INDIAN TRIBAL GOVERNMENT;
 13 MAJOR DISASTER; STATE.—The terms “Governor”,
 14 “Indian tribal government”, “major disaster”, and
 15 “State” have the meanings given those terms in sec-
 16 tion 102 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief
 17 and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5122).

18 (b) DECLARATION OF MAJOR DISASTERS DURING
 19 COVERED PERIOD.—Notwithstanding the last sentence of
 20 subsection (a) and subsection (b)(1) of section 401 of the
 21 Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assist-
 22 ance Act (42 U.S.C. 5170), for purposes of assistance pro-
 23 vided under that Act—

24 (1) any covered request shall be deemed to have
 25 been approved by the President; and

1 (2) the President shall provide the assistance
2 requested in the covered request—

3 (A) if the incident in the covered request,
4 based on the joint preliminary damage assess-
5 ment of the Federal Emergency Management
6 Agency, meets or exceeds the per capita indica-
7 tors or cost of assistance estimates for public
8 assistance under section 206.48(a) of title 44,
9 Code of Federal Regulations, as in effect on the
10 date of enactment of this Act; or

11 (B) if the Regional Administrator of the
12 Federal Emergency Management Agency for
13 the region in which the incident in the covered
14 request occurred determines that individual as-
15 sistance is warranted, according to the factors
16 outlined in section 206.48(b) of title 44, Code
17 of Federal Regulations, as in effect on the date
18 of enactment of this Act.

19 (c) NO DENIAL OF ASSISTANCE.—Notwithstanding
20 any other provision of law, the President may not withhold
21 or deny assistance provided under the Robert T. Stafford
22 Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C.
23 5121 et seq.) with respect to a covered request solely due
24 to a missed deadline relating to that assistance.

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