

Disaster Assistance for Rural Communities Act

[Public Law 117–249]

[This law has not been amended]

【Currency: This publication is a compilation of the text of Public Law 117–249. It was last amended by the public law listed in the As Amended Through note above and below at the bottom of each page of the pdf version and reflects current law through the date of the enactment of the public law listed at <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/collection/comps/>】

【Note: While this publication does not represent an official version of any Federal statute, substantial efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy of its contents. The official version of Federal law is found in the United States Statutes at Large and in the United States Code. The legal effect to be given to the Statutes at Large and the United States Code is established by statute (1 U.S.C. 112, 204).】

AN ACT To modify the requirements for the Administrator of the Small Business Administration relating to declaring a disaster in a rural area, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. [15 U.S.C. 631 note] SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Disaster Assistance for Rural Communities Act”.

SEC. 2. DISASTER DECLARATION IN RURAL AREAS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 7(b) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(b)) is amended by inserting after paragraph (15) the following:

“(16) DISASTER DECLARATION IN RURAL AREAS.—

“(A) DEFINITIONS.—In this paragraph—

“(i) the term ‘rural area’ means any county or other political subdivision of a State, the District of Columbia, or a territory or possession of the United States that is designated as a rural area by the Bureau of the Census; and

“(ii) the term ‘significant damage’ means, with respect to property, uninsured losses of not less than 40 percent of the estimated fair replacement value or pre-disaster fair market value of the damaged property, whichever is lower.

“(B) DISASTER DECLARATION.—For the purpose of making loans under paragraph (1) or (2), the Administrator may declare a disaster in a rural area for which a major disaster was declared by the President under section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5170) and for which individual

assistance was not authorized under section 408 of such Act (42 U.S.C. 5174) if—

“(i) the Governor of the State or the Chief Executive of the Indian tribal government in which the rural area is located requests such a declaration; and

“(ii) any home, small business concern, private nonprofit organization, or small agricultural cooperative has incurred significant damage in the rural area.

“(C) SBA REPORT.—Not later than 120 days after the date of enactment of this paragraph, and every year thereafter, the Administrator shall submit to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship of the Senate and the Committee on Small Business of the House of Representatives a report on, with respect to the 1-year period preceding submission of the report—

“(i) any economic injury that resulted from a major disaster declared by the President under section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5170) in a rural area;

“(ii) each request for assistance made by the Governor of a State or the Chief Executive of an Indian tribal government under subparagraph (B)(i) and the response of the Administrator, including the timeline for each response; and

“(iii) any regulatory changes that will impact the ability of communities in rural areas to obtain disaster assistance under this subsection.”.

(b) **[15 U.S.C. 636 note] REGULATIONS.**—Not later than 120 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the Small Business Administration shall issue regulations to carry out the amendment made by subsection (a).

(c) **GAO REPORT.**—

(1) **DEFINITION OF RURAL AREA.**—In this subsection, the term “rural area” means any county or other political subdivision of a State, the District of Columbia, or a territory or possession of the United States that is designated as a rural area by the Bureau of the Census.

(2) **REPORT.**—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship of the Senate and the Committee on Small Business of the House of Representatives a report on—

(A) any unique challenges that communities in rural areas face compared to communities in urbanized areas when seeking to obtain disaster assistance under section 7(b) of the Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(b)); and

(B) legislative recommendations for improving access to disaster assistance for communities in rural areas.