

**Calendar No. 699**

118TH CONGRESS }  
2d Session }

SENATE

{ REPORT  
118-293 }

**EXTREME HEAT EMERGENCY ACT OF 2024**

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**R E P O R T**

OF THE

**COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY AND  
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS  
UNITED STATES SENATE**

TO ACCOMPANY

**S. 4898**

**TO AMEND THE ROBERT T. STAFFORD DISASTER RELIEF  
AND EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE ACT TO INCLUDE EXTREME  
HEAT IN THE DEFINITION OF A MAJOR DISASTER**



DECEMBER 16, 2024.—Ordered to be printed

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Mr. PETERS, from the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, submitted the following

**R E P O R T**

[To accompany S. 4898]

The Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, to which was referred the bill (S. 4898) to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to include extreme heat in the definition of a major disaster, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon with an amendment, in the nature of a substitute, and an amendment to the title and recommends that the bill, as amended, do pass.

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**I. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY**

S. 4898, the *Extreme Heat Emergency Act of 2024*, amends the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act) to explicitly include extreme temperatures in the non-exhaustive list of natural catastrophes eligible for federal aid through a major disaster declaration.

**II. BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR THE LEGISLATION**

In recent years, extreme heat events have increased in frequency and intensity throughout the United States, resulting in communities across the country experiencing record-breaking temperatures. There were four times more extreme heat events between

2019 and 2023 compared to 30 years ago.<sup>1</sup> In 2023, there were approximately 2,302 heat-related deaths compared to 1,722 in 2022 and 1,602 in 2021.<sup>2</sup> Not only are these high temperatures detrimental to human health, but they also contribute to persistent drought conditions impacting communities across the country. For example, in October 2024, all but two states were experiencing drought conditions.<sup>3</sup> In response to more frequent and intense extreme heat events, in August 2024, the National Integrated Heat Health Information System and the Interagency Working Group on Extreme Heat announced a National Heat Strategy. This strategy discusses the effect of extreme heat on communities and an overarching approach to addressing the problem.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to record-breaking heat, states continue to experience record-breaking cold events.<sup>5</sup> Extreme temperatures can disproportionately affect certain occupational groups, individuals with pre-existing conditions, and different socioeconomic statuses.<sup>6</sup> These different events also cause prolonged strain and damage to critical infrastructure like roads, bridges, and the power grid. As the effects of natural hazards grow more devastating, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is tasked with preparing for and responding to them in an effective and efficient manner.

S. 4898, the *Extreme Heat Emergency Act of 2024*, explicitly lists extreme temperatures as eligible for a Major Disaster Declaration, which can unlock response and recovery funding from the federal government. Under current law, a major disaster is defined as: any natural catastrophe (including any hurricane, tornado, storm, high water, wind-driven water, tidal wave, tsunami, earthquake, volcanic eruption, landslide, mudslide, snowstorm, or drought), or regardless of cause, any fire, flood, or explosion. While extreme temperatures and any other natural catastrophe are already eligible for Major Disaster Declarations, the *Extreme Heat Emergency Act* codifies in statute that extreme temperatures are eligible for this disaster declaration, providing clarity to communities about their ability to access FEMA funding and resources.

### III. LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

Senator Jacky Rosen (D–NV) introduced S. 4898, the Extreme Heat Emergency Act of 2024, on July 31, 2024. The bill was referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

The Committee considered S. 4898 at a business meeting on September 25, 2024. At the business meeting, Senator Rosen offered

<sup>1</sup>E&E News by Politico, Home Page ([www.eenews.net/articles/why-the-government-lets-extreme-heat-get-away-with-murder/](http://www.eenews.net/articles/why-the-government-lets-extreme-heat-get-away-with-murder/)) (accessed November 12, 2024).

<sup>2</sup>Department of Health and Human Services, Home Page ([www.hhs.gov/climate-change-health-equity-environmental-justice/climate-change-health-equity/climate-health-outlook/extreme-heat/index.html](http://www.hhs.gov/climate-change-health-equity-environmental-justice/climate-change-health-equity/climate-health-outlook/extreme-heat/index.html)) (accessed November 12, 2024).

<sup>3</sup>New York Times, Home Page ([www.nytimes.com/2024/11/04/climate/united-states-record-drought.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2024/11/04/climate/united-states-record-drought.html)) (accessed November 12, 2024).

<sup>4</sup>National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Climate Program Office, Home Page ([cpo.noaa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/National\\_Heat\\_Strategy-2024\\_2030.pdf?source=email](https://cpo.noaa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/National_Heat_Strategy-2024_2030.pdf?source=email)) (accessed November 12, 2024).

<sup>5</sup>Forbes, Home Page ([www.forbes.com/sites/brianbushard/2024/01/18/cold-snap-shatters-records-in-kansas-city-seattle-and-st-louis-heres-where-else-cold-records-are-falling/](http://www.forbes.com/sites/brianbushard/2024/01/18/cold-snap-shatters-records-in-kansas-city-seattle-and-st-louis-heres-where-else-cold-records-are-falling/)) (accessed November 12, 2024).

<sup>6</sup>World Health Organization, *Heat and health* (<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/climate-change-heat-and-health>)(May 24, 2024). World Health Organization, *Heat and health* (<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/climate-change-heat-and-health>)(May 24, 2024).

a substitute amendment to the bill, as well as a modification to the substitute amendment. The Rosen substitute amendment, as modified, changed “extreme heat” to “extreme temperatures” in the language of the bill, as well as prohibited additional funding from being appropriated to carry out the bill in enactment. The Committee adopted the modification to the Rosen substitute amendment and the Rosen substitute amendment, as modified, by unanimous consent with Senators Peters, Carper, Hassan, Rosen, Blumenthal, Butler, Paul, Lankford, and Hawley present.

Senator Rosen also offered Rosen Amendment 2, which amended the long title of the bill. The Committee adopted Rosen amendment 2 by unanimous consent with Senators Peters, Carper, Hassan, Rosen, Blumenthal, Butler, Paul, Lankford, and Hawley present.

The bill, as amended by the Rosen substitute amendment, as modified, and Rosen amendment 2, was reported favorably by roll call vote of 6 yeas to 3 nays, with Senators Peters, Carper, Hassan, Rosen, Blumenthal, and Butler voting in the affirmative, and Senators Paul, Lankford, and Hawley voting in the negative. Senators Sinema and Ossoff voted yea by proxy, and Senators Johnson, Romney, Scott, and Marshall voted nay by proxy, for the record only.

#### IV. SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS OF THE BILL, AS REPORTED

##### *Section 1. Short title*

This section designates the short title of the bill as the “Extreme Heat Emergency Act of 2024.”

##### *Section 2. Definition of major disaster*

This section amends Section 102(2) of the Stafford Act by inserting “extreme temperature” in the list of disasters eligible for aid in a major disaster declaration.

##### *Section 3. No additional funds*

This section provides that no additional funds are authorized to be appropriated to carry out the bill.

#### V. EVALUATION OF REGULATORY IMPACT

Pursuant to the requirements of paragraph 11(b) of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, the Committee has considered the regulatory impact of this bill and determined that the bill will have no regulatory impact within the meaning of the rules. The Committee agrees with the Congressional Budget Office’s statement that the bill contains no intergovernmental or private sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (UMRA) and would impose no costs on state, local, or tribal governments.

#### VI. CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW MADE BY THE BILL, AS REPORTED

In compliance with paragraph 12 of rule XXVI of the Standing Rules of the Senate, changes in existing law made by the bill, as reported, are shown as follows (existing law proposed to be omitted is enclosed in brackets, new matter is printed in italic, and existing law in which no change is proposed is shown in roman):

**ROBERT T. STAFFORD DISASTER RELIEF AND EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE ACT**

\* \* \* \* \*  
TITLE I—FINDINGS, DECLARATIONS, AND DEFINITIONS  
\* \* \* \* \*

**Definitions**

**SEC. 102. As used in this Act—**

(1) \* \* \*

(2) MAJOR DISASTER.— “Major disaster” means any natural catastrophe (including any hurricane, tornado, storm, high water, winddriven water, tidal wave, tsunami, earthquake, volcanic eruption, landslide, mudslide, snowstorm, *extreme temperature*, or drought), or, regardless of cause, any fire, flood, or explosion, in any part of the United States, which in the determination of the President causes damage of sufficient severity and magnitude to warrant major disaster assistance under this Act to supplement the efforts and available resources of States, local governments, and disaster relief organizations in alleviating the damage, loss, hardship, or suffering caused thereby.

\* \* \* \* \*