

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall establish an advisory working group to encourage and foster collaborative efforts among individuals and entities engaged in disaster recovery relating to debris removal.

(2) MEMBERSHIP.—The advisory working group established under paragraph (1) shall be comprised of—

(A) representatives from the Federal Emergency Management Agency;

(B) representatives from the Army Corps of Engineers;

(C) representatives from the Natural Resources Conservation Service of the Department of Agriculture;

(D) representatives of States, Tribal governments, and units of local government; and

(E) subject matter experts in debris removal, including not less than 1 representative from the debris services contractor industry.

(c) GUIDANCE.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator, in consultation with the advisory working group established under subsection (b)(1), shall—

(1) determine whether guidance and procedures in effect as of the date of enactment of this Act with respect to the oversight and cost of debris removal contracts entered into under the debris removal program are sufficient; and

(2) if the Administrator, in consultation with the advisory working group established under subsection (b)(1), determines that the guidance and procedures described in paragraph (1) are insufficient, develop and implement additional such guidance and procedures, including—

(A) a requirement that each State, Tribal government, and unit of local government receiving a grant under the debris removal program take the primary role in the oversight function of debris removal;

(B) guidance for State, Tribal, and local debris monitors relating to debris removal operations, debris operations oversight, and contractor oversight, including contractor monitoring;

(C) guidance for streamlining the reimbursement of debris costs overall, including debris management planning and support for resilience in debris removal operations;

(D) checklists, job aids, eligibility requirements, contract requirements, debris management planning guidance, sample bids, and other items, as determined necessary by the Administrator, for State and local debris monitors;

(E) a list of the specific debris removal monitoring responsibilities expected to be completed by a State that receives a grant under the debris removal program;

(F) a list of the specific debris removal monitoring responsibilities expected to be completed by recipients of a grant under the debris removal program; and

(G) guidance for State and Tribal governments and units of local government to reduce duplication and inefficiency in debris removal contracting across the Federal Government, State and Tribal governments, and units of local government.

(d) TRAINING.—The Administrator shall conduct outreach to States, Tribal governments, and units of local government with respect to any guidance or support materials developed under this section.

(e) GAO STUDY.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a study that—

(1) studies the use and adoption rate of advance contracts for debris removal by selected States, Tribal governments, and units of local government;

(2) identifies the benefits and challenges of advance contracts for debris removal;

(3) with respect to the reporting and information sharing processes, as of the date of enactment of this Act, for advance contracts for debris removal between States and units of local government and Federal partners—

(A) assesses those processes; and

(B) makes any necessary recommendations for those processes;

(4) studies—

(A) the process for setting Federal reimbursement rates for the debris removal program;

(B) the use of penalties, as of the date of enactment of this Act, for violations of law and regulations relating to debris removal; and

(C) fraud, waste, and abuse relating to the debris removal program, including case studies; and

(5) makes any necessary recommendations for improvements to oversight and fraud prevention across the debris removal program.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. GRAVES) and the gentleman from Washington (Mr. LARSEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material on S. 310.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Louisiana?

There was no objection.

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, S. 310, the Disaster Contract Improvement Act, aims to help improve the disaster contracting process by directing the Administrator of FEMA to establish a working group to examine the debris removal process. The working group will include representatives from FEMA, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service, officials from State, Tribal, and local governments, and subject matter experts.

The legislation also directs the Government Accountability Office to conduct a study on the debris removal advance contracting process.

I thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. LALOTA) for his work on the House companion bill to help reduce waste, fraud, and abuse within the post-disaster services area.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support of this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 310. This bill directs the Administrator of FEMA to convene an advisory group to improve debris removal contract processes and reduce costs.

When disasters strike, resulting rubble and debris leave affected commu-

nities with an expensive cleanup. FEMA assistance is an essential resource for helping communities recover, but the disaster contracting process can be inefficient and costly.

This bill brings stakeholders together to improve the disaster contracting process, maximizing the impact of Federal dollars and speeding disaster recovery.

Mr. Speaker, clearing debris after a disaster is one of the first steps to a successful recovery. This bill would direct the Administrator of FEMA to convene a stakeholder group to improve the agency's disaster contracting processes.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, the Disaster Contract Improvement Act will help improve the debris removal process following disasters and help to prevent waste, fraud, and abuse.

Mr. Speaker, in the aftermath of hurricanes and other disasters, I have personally witnessed absolutely obscene rates and extraordinary timeframes for debris removal in the aftermath of disasters, watching as multiple layers of profiting from 1 cubic yard of debris material that is removed.

The Transportation and Infrastructure Committee favorably reported the House companion to this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support of S. 310 so we can get this important legislation signed into law, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. GRAVES) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, S. 310.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

WEATHER ALERT RESPONSE AND NOTIFICATION ACT

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2892) to direct the Comptroller General of the United States to conduct a study on the effectiveness of local alerting systems, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 2892

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Weather Alert Response and Notification Act" or the "WARN Act".

SEC. 2. EFFECTIVENESS OF LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL ALERTING SYSTEMS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Comptroller General of the United States shall conduct a study on the

effectiveness of local, State, and Federal emergency alerting systems in disseminating timely and relevant information during weather-related emergencies to help communities develop better policies and procedures for emergency response and enhance public safety in the event of a weather-related emergency.

(b) CONTENTS.—In conducting the study under subsection (a), the Comptroller General shall—

(1) evaluate the efficacy of various alert mediums, including platforms such as social media, to disseminate emergency alerts, including travel bans and mass power outages, during extreme weather events;

(2) assess the extent that guidance and training exists for developing alert content, such as ensuring alerts are clear, relevant, and provide the public with actionable information; and

(3) determine whether improvements could be made to public alerting based on input from a selected sample of emergency managers, local officials, and community groups.

(c) REPORT.—Not later than 18 months after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General shall submit to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate a report on the study conducted under subsection (a).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. GRAVES) and the gentleman from Washington (Mr. LARSEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Louisiana.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and insert extraneous material on H.R. 2892.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Louisiana?

There was no objection.

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 2892, also known as the WARN Act, directs GAO to conduct a study on the effectiveness of local, State, and Federal emergency alerting systems in disseminating timely and relevant information during weather-related emergencies.

By examining these alerting systems, we can better understand how to improve communication and public safety during emergencies.

I thank the gentleman from New York (Mr. LANGWORTHY) for his work on this critical piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support of the legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2892. The bill directs the GAO, or Government Accountability Office, to study the efficacy of local weather alerting systems.

As the climate crisis worsens and extreme weather events strike our communities with increasing frequency and severity, frontline communities need

time to prepare and react in the face of these dangers.

Every wasted second endangers lives. That is why local weather alerting systems are an indispensable tool. They give communities the time needed to take decisive and lifesaving action. Understanding how best to leverage, develop, and improve this important tool will help ensure community preparedness.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from New York (Mr. LANGWORTHY), the author of this legislation.

Mr. LANGWORTHY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 2892, the Weather Alert Response and Notification Act, also known as the WARN Act, to improve public safety during extreme weather events.

I am proud to lead this bipartisan bill that would direct the Comptroller General to evaluate the effectiveness of our emergency alert systems—at the local, State, and Federal levels—in reaching our communities when it matters the most.

I introduced this legislation after my district experienced tragedy during Winter Storm Elliott in December 2022, right before Christmas Eve. Western New York and the southern tier are used to heavy snowfall every winter. During Winter Storm Elliott, we were hit with whiteout blizzards and hurricane-force winds that quickly dumped more than 4 feet of snow.

People were trapped in their cars for days. Many were trapped in their homes without power or heat. Rescue crews struggled to get those people rescued who were in need, leading to more than 40 deaths in our region. Some of these deaths could have been prevented, but local warning systems failed to adequately communicate the risks to the public. We cannot let this happen again.

That is where the WARN Act comes in. Whether it is a blizzard, hurricane, tornado, or other severe weather event, we must ensure that our emergency alert systems are timely, accurate, and capable of reaching everyone, no matter what technology they have.

Preparation is the key to protecting lives and minimizing damage during these crises. Reliable and effective emergency alerts give individuals the opportunity to act—keeping themselves and their families safe, clearing the way for first responders, and ensuring repair crews can restore power, clear roads, and respond more quickly in emergencies. This preparation helps save lives and reduces long-term harm. The WARN Act will examine cutting-edge technologies, such as mobile alerts, satellite communication, and next-generation platforms, to determine how we can improve these lifesaving systems.

It will also provide critical insights to local emergency managers and

elected officials, who are often on the front lines of these crises.

As we are heading into 2025, we have more technology than ever at our fingertips, but we need to make sure it is employed in the right way to help us get through extreme weather events. By equipping our communities with clear, more actionable alerts, we can save lives and prevent tragedies like those we experienced during Winter Storm Elliott.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this commonsense, bipartisan legislation to strengthen our Nation's emergency response systems.

Mr. LARSEN of Washington. Mr. Speaker, local weather alerting systems must work properly to save lives. This bill would direct the Government Accountability Office to identify and document any improvements that need to be made to such systems.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, in closing, I want to reflect upon Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and Hurricane Sandy in 2012. Both storms resulted in extraordinary death, with, I believe, around 1,700 lives lost in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

This legislation is designed to help prevent those types of deaths and to help communicate the risk to the public, and I strongly urge support for this legislation. It is going to ensure that we have better policies and procedures for alerts during weather-related emergencies.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. GRAVES) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2892, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: "A bill to direct the Comptroller General of the United States to conduct a study on the effectiveness of emergency alerting systems, and for other purposes."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

FEMA LOAN INTEREST PAYMENT RELIEF ACT

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 2672) to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to provide for the authority to reimburse local governments or electric cooperatives for interest expenses, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows: