

dollars. FEMA allows States to utilize a percentage of those grants to cover the cost of administrator requirements and grant management.

Current law requires management costs to be strictly tied to each specific disaster declaration. However, most States are managing recovery for multiple disaster declarations simultaneously.

A project inspector working a full day may visit multiple disaster sites in a State. If those sites are associated with more than one disaster, all associated costs must be parceled out to possibly dozens of open grants. This is inefficient, wastes taxpayer dollars, and slows recovery.

This bill encourages efficiency by allowing States to use their management funds across all open disasters. Additionally, H.R. 7671 helps build capacity at FEMA and at the local level by rewarding applicants that complete recoveries from major disaster declarations quickly.

One of the most common concerns we hear from emergency management experts is that FEMA, States, and local governments do not have sufficient personnel or resources to prepare for and respond to disasters. Increasing efficiency and building capacity is one of the most important actions we can take to ensure nationwide disaster readiness and empower State and local emergency managers. I urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. NEGUSE).

Mr. NEGUSE. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague from Oregon, Representative HOYLE, for her kind words and her articulate description of the bill that we are considering today.

In particular, I thank Ranking Member LARSEN for his leadership on the committee and his help in getting this bill across the finish line, we hope, in the days and weeks ahead.

I thank my friend and colleague, the chairman of this distinguished committee. I certainly wish him well in all of his future endeavors. I have enjoyed our verbal sparring on the Select Committee on the Climate Crisis and the House Committee on Natural Resources. I have appreciated his friendship and also appreciated his leadership and his support for this piece of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about the Disaster Management Costs Modernization Act. As you heard from Representative HOYLE, as we continue to face increasing numbers of natural disasters across our country—wildfires, floods, hurricanes, and more—it is critically important that we work to equip our communities with the resources they need.

My home State of Colorado has seen firsthand the devastating impacts of these disasters, as we have unfortunately experienced record-breaking and deadly wildfires, drought, and flood conditions all over in just the past few years.

Mr. Speaker, this bill would strengthen our efforts to prepare for and mitigate the impacts of future disasters across our country. It is a simple bill. When State and local governments receive Federal assistance through the Federal Emergency Management Agency, otherwise known as FEMA, they are allocated a percentage of that assistance for management costs or administrative costs to manage that disaster.

However, as you heard Representative HOYLE describe, those management costs are awarded for a particular disaster. When managing multiple open disasters, the reality is that that results in unnecessary administrative burdens on State and local governments and limits flexibility for disaster recovery and preparedness.

Mr. Speaker, let me give you a very practical example of what this looks like. In Colorado's Second Congressional District, we have been home to multiple historically large and destructive wildfires. Oftentimes, these wildfires happen simultaneously in different parts of our State and indeed different parts of my district.

In my view, the ability for the State government and local governments to apply these cost-sharing dollars these grants, from FEMA for different disasters simultaneously has been inhibited by, in my view, a nonsensical approach in current law. That is what we seek to change, Mr. Speaker.

It is a commonsense way to cut red tape and ultimately benefit communities across the West and across the country as they continue to grapple with natural disasters in the years ahead.

I am proud this bill is supported by a broad spectrum of Coloradans, Republicans and Democrats. That includes my colleagues in this Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Representative HOYLE and the chairman. I encourage everyone to support this important bill.

Ms. HOYLE of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, emergency managers need more resources and capacity to effectively respond to increasingly frequent and severe disasters. This bill incentivizes faster disaster recovery, gets communities back on their feet, and creates more capacity in Federal and local emergency management offices.

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 the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, first of all, I thank the gentleman from Colorado for his kind words and for sponsoring this legislation, for offering this legislation.

Just to put a face on it, in 2020 and in 2021, my home State of Louisiana had Hurricane Laura, Delta, and Zeta. In 2021, Hurricane Ida came through the State. In some cases you had the exact same footprint for all four hurricanes. You are asking an emergency re-

sponder to try to separate the work that they are doing, whether it was for Hurricane Laura or Hurricane Ida. You simply can't do it.

This does simplify the process. I think it will expedite recovery and remove some of the bureaucracy from the aftermath of disasters. It will provide States more flexibility in managing disasters, allowing them to have a greater focus on the needs of disaster victims.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support H.R. 7671, 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, H.R. 7671.

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.

PROMOTING OPPORTUNITIES TO WIDEN ELECTRICAL RESILIENCE ACT OF 2024

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 9541) to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to authorize Federal agencies to provide certain essential assistance for hazard mitigation for electric utilities, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 9541

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 "Promoting Opportunities to Widen Electrical Resilience Act of 2024" or the "POWER Act of 2024".

SEC. 2. ESSENTIAL ASSISTANCE.

(a) Section 403 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5170b) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(e) ELECTRIC UTILITIES.—

“(1) HAZARD MITIGATION ACTIVITIES.—An electric utility may carry out cost-effective hazard mitigation activities jointly or otherwise in combination with activities for the restoration of power carried out with assistance provided under this section.

“(2) ELIGIBILITY FOR ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE.—In any case in which an electric utility facility receives assistance under this section for the emergency restoration of power, the receipt of such assistance shall not render such facility ineligible for any hazard mitigation assistance under section 406 for which such facility is otherwise eligible.”.

(b) APPLICABILITY.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall only apply to amounts appropriated on or after the date of enactment of this Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. GRAVES) and the gentleman from Oregon (Ms. HOYLE) 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 to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material into the RECORD on H.R. 9541.

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. 9541, the POWER Act of 2024, addresses FEMA's problematic interpretation of section 403 of the Stafford Act by clarifying electric utilities are classified as essential assistance.

This legislative fix allows electric utilities to work quickly to restore power following a disaster and maintain eligibility to later implement permanent fixes that include mitigation measures.

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

Ms. HOYLE of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 9541, the bill I cosponsored with Representative EZELL. This bill empowers publicly owned electric utilities to implement hazard mitigation improvements during disaster recovery.

When disasters strike, they leave a trail of destruction, including damaged energy infrastructure that needs to be immediately repaired to restore power.

At the same time, this can present an opportunity to improve the resilience of power infrastructure to reduce the risk of outages in the future. Unfortunately, current law prevents FEMA from reimbursing utilities for hazard mitigation as they make temporary disaster repairs. This leads to wasted opportunity, more frequent power outages, and higher costs passed on to ratepayers.

Commonsense solutions like H.R. 9541 are more critical than ever to keep energy costs low for American families. This bill maximizes FEMA's resources and helps communities protect critical infrastructure, leading to lower costs for utilities and families in the wake of future disasters.

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

□ 1530

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I don't have any more speakers, I am prepared to close, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. HOYLE of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, the cost of recovering from increasingly frequent severe weather events often raises the price of America's electric bills.

This bill will help public power make their systems more resilient at the

time of repair, increasing efficiency and cutting overall costs.

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

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, in the aftermath of a disaster, oftentimes communities will lose power. This legislation simply allows the utilities to come in and put temporary fixes in place so power can get stood back up and power can get turned back on for these recovering communities. It will help ensure that electric utilities are not penalized for those temporary, interim actions to act quickly to restore power for Americans impacted by natural disasters by clarifying their eligibility for mitigation assistance.

Mr. Speaker, I urge support of H.R. 9541, 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, H.R. 9541.

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.

AMTRAK EXECUTIVE BONUS
DISCLOSURE ACT

Mr. GRAVES of Louisiana. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 8689) to require Amtrak to publicly disclose certain bonus compensation paid to Amtrak executives, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 8689

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 "Amtrak Executive Bonus Disclosure Act".

SEC. 2. AMTRAK REPORTS AND AUDITS.

Section 24315(a) of title 49, United States Code, is amended—

(1) by inserting " , and make available to the public on the website of Amtrak," after "submit to Congress"; and

(2) by striking paragraph (2) and inserting the following:

"(2) provide the annual base pay and any bonus compensation paid to a member of the executive leadership team (including the chief executive officer, president, and officers) of Amtrak, including the criteria and metrics used to determine any such bonus compensation; and".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. GRAVES) and the gentleman from Oregon (Ms. HOYLE) 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 to revise and extend their re-

marks and include extraneous material in the RECORD on H.R. 8689.

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. 8689 was introduced by my good friend, Representative MOLINARO of New York. The bill is intended to ensure annual bonuses awarded to Amtrak's top executives are made public at the beginning of every calendar year.

Amtrak relies heavily on government subsidies, and during more than 50 years of existence, it has never made a profit. Nonetheless, Amtrak executives have been awarded generous six-figure bonuses despite financial losses and service issues.

The disclosure of such huge payouts rightfully outrages the public and members of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

We had a hearing on this many, many months ago where Amtrak officials were unwilling to disclose some of the information we had requested. This bill is a strong step toward transparency and accountability for Amtrak executives and Amtrak's board of directors, which awards the bonuses.

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

Ms. HOYLE of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague Mr. MOLINARO for sponsoring this really important legislation.

I rise in support of the Amtrak Executive Bonus Disclosure Act. This bill requires Amtrak to post the compensation of its executive leadership team annually on the Amtrak website. Congress already requires the Nation's intercity passenger railroads to submit this information to Congress. This bill increases transparency by making this information readily available to the public.

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. MOLINARO), the sponsor of bill.

Mr. MOLINARO. Mr. Speaker, I first extend my appreciation to Chairman SAM GRAVES not only for leadership of the committee this last year but also for working with us to move this piece of legislation.

Amtrak was certainly hesitant to disclose their bonuses that came immediately after the COVID pandemic and the stress and stressors on commuters, passengers, and employees. The fact that we had to work, despite the significant taxpayer subsidies, to have them disclose this information was obscene at best.

I, too, want to take a moment, though, since I have 5 minutes, to express my appreciation and gratitude to