

116TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 6785

To amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to ensure appointment of a Tribal response coordinator whenever a multi-State major disaster or emergency is declared.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 8, 2020

Mr. RUIZ introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

A BILL

To amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to ensure appointment of a Tribal response coordinator whenever a multi-State major disaster or emergency is declared.

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 “FEMA Tribal Coordi-
5 nator Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. EMERGENCY RESPONSE COORDINATOR FOR FED-**
2 **ERALLY RECOGNIZED TRIBES.**

3 Title III of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief
4 and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5141 et seq.)
5 is amended by adding at the end the following:

6 **“SEC. 328. EMERGENCY RESPONSE COORDINATOR FOR**
7 **FEDERALLY RECOGNIZED TRIBES.**

8 “(a) IN GENERAL.—Immediately following the dec-
9 laration of a multi-State major disaster or emergency, in-
10 cluding a public health emergency, the President shall ap-
11 point a Tribal response coordinating officer.

12 “(b) DUTIES OF THE TRIBAL EMERGENCY RE-
13 SPONSE COORDINATOR.—The duties of the Tribal re-
14 sponse coordinating officer shall include the following:

15 “(1) ASSESSMENT.—Conduct an assessment of
16 relief most urgently needed in consultation with all
17 affected Indian tribal governments and in the case
18 of a public health emergency, work with the Indian
19 Health Service to conduct outreach to tribally oper-
20 ated health programs to assess needs.

21 “(2) LIAISON.—Establish a liaison within each
22 Bureau of Indian Affairs Regional Office and each
23 Indian Health Service Area Office.

24 “(3) ADMINISTRATION.—Coordinate adminis-
25 tration of relief to Indian tribal governments and
26 tribal healthcare providers (including Urban Indian

1 Health Programs, tribally operated health programs,
2 and Indian Health Service-operated facilities), in-
3 cluding—

4 “(A) in the event of a public health emer-
5 gency, distributions from the Strategic National
6 Stockpile; and

7 “(B) establish a single point of contact for
8 tribal requests for assistance, including emer-
9 gency response personnel, equipment, and med-
10 ical supplies.

11 “(4) REIMBURSEMENT.—Coordinate assistance
12 with submission of reimbursement requests and
13 grant applications, including outstanding reimburse-
14 ment requests or applications related to a major dis-
15 aster or emergency after such disaster or emergency
16 is closed. Notwithstanding any other provision in
17 this Act, the Tribal response coordinator shall work
18 with the Administrator of the Federal Emergency
19 Agency to continue to provide assistance with such
20 applications until funds are disbursed.

21 “(c) TRIBAL REQUESTS.—The Administrator shall
22 consider a request from an Indian tribal government in
23 the same manner as a request from a State.”.

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