

116TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# S. 3204

To direct the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to revise the policy of the Agency to address the threats of climate change, to include considerations of climate change in the strategic plan of the Agency, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 16, 2020

Mr. MARKEY introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

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# A BILL

To direct the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to revise the policy of the Agency to address the threats of climate change, to include considerations of climate change in the strategic plan of the Agency, and for other purposes.

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 Climate  
5 Change Preparedness Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7       Congress finds the following:

1                             (1) Under the previous administration, FEMA’s  
2                             2014–2018 Strategic Plan explicitly mentioned and  
3                             referenced climate change as a source of changing  
4                             and increasing national disaster risks, in the near  
5                             and long term, that—

6                                 (A) must be effectively integrated into the  
7                             Agency’s risk assessment resources and proc-  
8                             esses; and

9                                 (B) the entire emergency management  
10                             community will need to adapt appropriately to  
11                             as they strengthen their risk management pro-  
12                             grams.

13                             (2) In FEMA’s 2018–2022 Strategic Plan, de-  
14                             spite the mounting threat posed by climate change,  
15                             the term “climate change” is entirely absent from  
16                             the text.

17                             (3) It is the general consensus of the global sci-  
18                             entific community that—

19                                 (A) the evidence of climate change is un-  
20                             equivocal;

21                                 (B) anthropogenic greenhouse gas emis-  
22                             sions are the primary cause of climate change;  
23                             and

(C) as a direct result of climate change, sea levels are rising and extreme weather events are becoming more commonplace and severe.

(4) The last 5 years have been the warmest years on record since the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration began recording global air temperatures in 1895.

(5) 2017, one of the three warmest years on record, was also the most expensive year on record for emergency disaster costs in the United States due to 16 weather and climate disasters.

(6) It is the mission of FEMA to reduce the loss of life and property and protect our institutions from all hazards by leading and supporting the Nation in a comprehensive, risk-based emergency management program of mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.

(7) It is detrimental to the mission of FEMA, and the Agency's ability to follow its mandate, to explicitly or implicitly deny or ignore the existence of climate change or the implications of such on national security and national emergency management.

(8) To fully and effectively carry out its mandate, FEMA must comprehensively assess and incorporate the current and future natural disaster risks

1 and impacts posed by climate change throughout the  
2 Agency's policies, plans, programs, strategies, and  
3 operations.

4 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

5 In this Act:

6 (1) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term “Administrator” means the Administrator of FEMA.

7 (2) AGENCY; FEMA.—The terms “Agency” and  
8 “FEMA” mean the Federal Emergency Management  
9 Agency.

10 (3) CLIMATE CHANGE.—The term “climate  
11 change” means the long-term shifts in global and regional  
12 climate patterns, and associated phenomena,  
13 that are occurring primarily as a result of anthropogenic  
14 greenhouse gas emissions.

15 (4) EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS.—The term  
16 “extreme weather events” means historically rare or  
17 severe natural disasters such as heat waves,  
18 droughts, floods, tornadoes, and hurricanes.

19 (5) FRONTLINE COMMUNITY.—The term  
20 “frontline community” means a low-income community,  
21 community of color, or Tribal community that  
22 is disproportionately impacted or burdened by climate  
23 change and associated phenomena.

1                             (6) SEA-LEVEL RISE.—The term “sea-level  
2 rise” means the local, regional, and global long-term  
3 trends in rising average sea levels that are occurring  
4 as a direct result of climate change and additional  
5 local factors such as land subsidence.

6 **SEC. 4. STATEMENTS OF INTENT AND POLICY.**

7                             Section 101 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief  
8 and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121) is  
9 amended—

10                             (1) in subsection (b)—

11                                 (A) in paragraph (5), by striking “and” at  
12 the end;

13                                 (B) in paragraph (6), by adding a semi-  
14 colon at the end; and

15                                 (C) by adding at the end the following:

16                                 “(7) integrating, to the greatest extent prac-  
17 ticable, climate change adaptation planning and ac-  
18 tions into the programs, policies, and operations of  
19 the Federal Emergency Management Agency; and

20                                 “(8) assisting State, local, volunteer, and pri-  
21 vate partners in preparing for and mitigating the  
22 risks posed by climate change as listed in subsection  
23 (c)(2), as well as any other climate change risks.”;  
24 and

25                                 (2) by adding at the end the following:

1       “(c) CLIMATE CHANGE.—It is the policy of the Fed-  
2 eral Emergency Management Agency to recognize that—  
3           “(1) climate change is—

4              “(A) an irrefutable, multidimensional, and  
5 significant near and long-term threat to United  
6 States—

7              “(i) homeland security;  
8              “(ii) national security; and  
9              “(iii) national disaster risk; and

10             “(B) primarily caused by anthropogenic  
11 greenhouse gas emissions; and

12             “(2) as a direct result of climate change, the  
13 United States faces the increased threat of—

14              “(A) changing, more frequent, and more  
15 severe extreme weather events;

16              “(B) rising natural hazard risk;

17              “(C) disruptions to or failure of critical in-  
18 frastructure;

19              “(D) sea-level rise;

20              “(E) internal population displacement;

21              “(F) the spread of life-threatening dis-  
22 eases;

23              “(G) rising annual disaster costs; and

24              “(H) disproportionately high risks and im-  
25 pacts to low-income communities, communities

1           of color, Tribal communities, and other front-  
2           line communities.”.

3 **SEC. 5. DEFINITIONS IN THE STAFFORD ACT.**

4       Section 102 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief  
5 and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5122) is  
6 amended by adding at the end the following:

7           “(13) CLIMATE CHANGE.—The term ‘climate  
8 change’ means the long-term shifts in global and re-  
9 gional climate patterns, and associated phenomena,  
10 that are occurring primarily as a result of anthro-  
11 genic greenhouse gas emissions.

12          “(14) EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS.—The term  
13 ‘extreme weather events’ means historically rare or  
14 severe natural disasters such as heat waves,  
15 droughts, floods, tornadoes, and hurricanes.

16          “(15) FRONTLINE COMMUNITY.—The term  
17 ‘frontline community’ means a low-income commu-  
18 nity, community of color, or Tribal community that  
19 is disproportionately impacted or burdened by cli-  
20 mate change and associated phenomena.

21          “(16) SEA-LEVEL RISE.—The term ‘sea-level  
22 rise’ means the local, regional, and global long-term  
23 trends in rising average sea levels that are occurring  
24 as a direct result of climate change and additional  
25 local factors such as land subsidence.”.

1   **SEC. 6. INCLUSION OF CLIMATE CHANGE IN STRATEGIC**  
2                   **PLAN.**

3                   (a) CURRENT STRATEGIC PLAN.—

4                   (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days  
5                   after the date of enactment of this Act, the Adminis-  
6                   trator shall revise the 2018–2022 Strategic Plan  
7                   to—

8                   (A) ensure that the text of the plan explic-  
9                   itly mentions climate change, in accordance  
10                  with the policy of FEMA in section 101 of the  
11                  Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emer-  
12                  gency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121), as  
13                  amended by section 4; and

14                  (B) address the implications of climate  
15                  change on homeland security and near- and  
16                  long-term national disaster risk, including  
17                  emergency preparedness, response, recovery,  
18                  and mitigation.

19                  (2) BRIEFING.—Not later than 180 days after  
20                  the date of enactment of this Act, appropriate per-  
21                  sonnel of FEMA shall—

22                  (A) brief the Committee on Homeland Se-  
23                  curity and Governmental Affairs of the Senate  
24                  and the Committee on Homeland Security of  
25                  the House of Representatives on the process  
26                  and rationale that resulted in the exclusion of

1           references to climate change from the originally  
2           published 2018–2022 Strategic Plan; and

3               (B) if requested by the Chair of the Com-  
4           mittee on Homeland Security and Govern-  
5           mental Affairs of the Senate or the Committee  
6           on Homeland Security of the House of Rep-  
7           resentatives, provide to that committee a writ-  
8           ten report describing that process and rationale.

9               (b) FUTURE STRATEGIC PLANS.—Any strategic plan  
10          subsequent to the 2018–2022 Strategic Plan developed by  
11          FEMA shall—

12               (1) explicitly mention climate change, in accord-  
13           ance with the policy of FEMA under section 101 of  
14           the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emer-  
15           gency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121), as amended  
16           by section 4; and

17               (2) address the implications of climate change  
18           on homeland security and near- and long-term na-  
19           tional disaster risk, including emergency prepared-  
20           ness, response, recovery, and mitigation, drawing  
21           upon findings and recommendations, once available,  
22           from the Climate Change Subcommittee described in  
23           section 7 and the assessment of climate change risks  
24           and preparedness described in section 8.

## 1 SEC. 7. NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL CLIMATE CHANGE

## 2 SUBCOMMITTEE.

3 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 60 days after  
4 the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Home-  
5 land Security shall establish, as a subcommittee of the Na-  
6 tional Advisory Council, the Climate Change Sub-  
7 committee (in this Act referred to as the “Sub-  
8 committee”).

## 9 (b) MEMBERSHIP.—

10 (1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other  
11 provision of law, the Subcommittee shall consist of—

12 (A) the Administrator of FEMA;  
13 (B) the Director of the United States Geo-  
14 logical Survey of the Department of the Inter-  
15 rior;

16 (C) the Director of the Bureau of Safety  
17 and Environmental Enforcement of the Depart-  
18 ment of the Interior;

19 (D) the Under Secretary of Commerce for  
20 Oceans and Atmosphere;

21 (E) the Commanding Officer of the United  
22 States Army Corps of Engineers;

23 (F) the Director of the Office of Homeland  
24 Security and Emergency Coordination of the  
25 Department of Agriculture;

(G) the Executive Director of the Federal Highway Administration of the Department of Transportation;

(H) the Executive Director of the Federal Transit Administration of the Department of Transportation;

(I) the Under Secretary of Energy of the Department of Energy;

(J) the Commissioner of the Federal Housing Administration of the Department of Housing and Urban Development;

(K) the Assistant Administrator of the Office of Land and Emergency Management of the Environmental Protection Agency;

(L) the Acting Director of the Center for Preparedness and Response of the Department of Health and Human Services:

(M) such other qualified individuals as the Administrator shall appoint as soon as practicable from among—

(i) members of the National Advisory Council who have the requisite technical knowledge and expertise to address climate change threats to homeland security, including—

#### (I) emergency management and

emergency response providers;

## (II) State, local, and Tribal gov-

ernment officials;

### (III) climate scientists and ex-

perts in natural disaster risk assess-

ment; and

#### (IV) experts in climate change

adaptation, mitigation, and resilience;

and

(ii) individuals who have the requisite

technical knowledge and expertise to serve

on the Subcommittee, including not less

than 1 representative from each of—

(I) an environmental justice or-

ganization representing low-income

communities and communities of color

that are disproportionately impacted

by climate change;

(II) a Tribal community that is

disproportionately impacted by climate

change or environmental pollution;

(III) an organized labor group

within the resilient infrastructure sec-

tor;

(V) a city or county that is directly impacted by coastal sea-level rise;

9 (VI) a State that is directly im-  
10 pacted by coastal sea-level rise;

(VII) a city or county that is highly impacted by wildfires or droughts;

(VIII) a State that is highly impacted by wildfires or droughts;

16 (IX) scientists with expertise in  
17 climate science and natural disaster  
18 risk assessment who are faculty mem-  
19 bers at an accredited university; and

20 (X) experts in homeland security  
21 threat assessment and intelligence  
22 analysis, especially as it concerns nat-  
23 ural disasters; and

(N) representatives of such other stakeholders and interested and affected parties as the Administrator determines appropriate.

12 (c) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The Subcommittee shall ad-  
13 vise the Administrator on how to best incorporate climate  
14 change, including risk assessments and strategies for ad-  
15 aptation and mitigation, into and throughout the policies,  
16 plans, programs, and operations of FEMA, including  
17 through the performance of the following duties:

18                         (1) ASSESSMENT.—Not later than 18 months  
19                         after the date of enactment of this Act, the Sub-  
20                         committee shall develop and submit to the Adminis-  
21                         trator and Congress, and make available to the pub-  
22                         lic, an assessment of all relevant FEMA policies,  
23                         plans, programs, strategies, and operations with a  
24                         focus on climate change-related risks, impacts, adap-

1 tation, preparedness, mitigation, and resilience,  
2 which assessment shall address—

3 (A) existing and future risks and impacts  
4 posed by climate change to States, cities, and  
5 communities throughout the United States, in-  
6 cluding the current and potential impacts of cli-  
7 mate change on national emergency manage-  
8 ment, annual disaster costs, and natural dis-  
9 aster mitigation, preparedness, response, and  
10 recovery;

11 (B) the extent to which climate change, in-  
12 cluding risk assessments, resilience, adaptation,  
13 and mitigation, is, as of the date of the assess-  
14 ment, integrated within FEMA policies, plans,  
15 programs, strategies, and operations, as well as  
16 the extent to which and areas where that inte-  
17 gration is lacking;

18 (C) the extent to which climate change, in-  
19 cluding risk assessments, resilience, adaptation,  
20 and mitigation, is, as of the date of the assess-  
21 ment, incorporated into technical assistance,  
22 outreach, grant, and loan programs, as well as  
23 the extent to which and programs where such  
24 integration is lacking;

1                             (D) partnerships and coordination with  
2                             Federal, State, and local agencies and authori-  
3                             ties, as well as volunteer and private entities;

4                             (E) data collection, management, and anal-  
5                             ysis;

6                             (F) recommendations regarding how  
7                             FEMA can better incorporate climate change  
8                             throughout FEMA policies, plans, programs,  
9                             strategies, and operations, which shall ad-  
10                          dress—

11                          (i) risk assessments, including ways to  
12                          more comprehensively predict and incor-  
13                          porate existing and future risks as they re-  
14                          late to climate change;

15                          (ii) strategies to increase climate  
16                          change adaptation, mitigation, and resil-  
17                          ience in communities throughout the  
18                          United States;

19                          (iii) ways to ensure that investments  
20                          and strategies around climate change ad-  
21                          aptation, mitigation, and resilience benefit  
22                          all communities, especially frontline com-  
23                          munities;

(iv) critical information, communication, and policy gaps, barriers, and challenges;

(v) technical assistance, outreach, grant, and loan programs, including ways that FEMA can use and expand those programs to increase climate change preparedness throughout the emergency management community and strengthen climate change adaptation, mitigation, and resilience across the United States, particularly in frontline communities;

(vi) coordination with all relevant partners, including Federal, State, and local agencies and authorities, as well as private entities and volunteers;

(vii) monitoring, recording, and analyzing FEMA actions, data management, and budget allocations to help advance climate resilience;

(viii) methodologies for integrating and disseminating scientific knowledge of projected climate change impacts and risks, and other relevant data and information

3 (ix) platforms for sharing best prac-  
4 tices, information, and lessons learned with  
5 the emergency management community in  
6 the United States and general public, in-  
7 cluding public web pages, webinars, and  
8 workshops;

9 (x) FEMA's 2018–2022 Strategic  
10 Plan, and ways for FEMA to better incor-  
11 porate climate change into all future stra-  
12 tegic plans; and

23 (A) review any relevant Agency policies,  
24 plans, programs, strategies, and operations, and

1           make any necessary recommendations thereof,  
2           regarding climate change;

3               (B) support the Administrator in incor-  
4           porating and implementing findings and rec-  
5           ommendations from the assessment described in  
6           paragraph (1) into all relevant Agency policies,  
7           plans, programs, strategies, and operations, in-  
8           cluding the assessment of climate change risks  
9           and preparedness described in section 8; and

10               (C) perform any other relevant duties as  
11           the Administrator determines to be appropriate.

12               (d) PUBLIC MEETINGS.—In carrying out its duties  
13           under this section, the Subcommittee shall—

14                       (1) consult with stakeholders through not less  
15           than 2 public meetings each year, the total of which  
16           not less than 3 shall be during the time in which the  
17           Subcommittee is conducting the assessment de-  
18           scribed in subsection (c)(1); and

19                       (2) seek input from all stakeholder interests in-  
20           cluding State and local representatives, environ-  
21           mental and climate justice organizations, private in-  
22           dustry representatives, advocacy groups, planning  
23           and resilience organizations, labor representatives,  
24           and representatives from frontline communities.

1       (e) COMPENSATION AND EXPENSES.—Any non-feder-  
2 ally employed member of the Subcommittee, when attend-  
3 ing meetings of the Subcommittee or when otherwise en-  
4 gaged in the business of the Subcommittee, shall receive—

5                 (1) compensation at a rate fixed by the Sec-  
6 retary of Homeland Security, not exceeding the daily  
7 equivalent of the current rate of basic pay in effect  
8 for GS–15 of the General Schedule under section  
9 5332 of title 5, United States Code, including travel  
10 time; and

11                 (2) travel or transportation expenses under sec-  
12 tion 5703 of title 5, United States Code.

13       (f) CHAIR.—The Administrator shall serve as the  
14 Chair of the Subcommittee.

15       (g) STAFF.—

16                 (1) FEMA.—Upon request of the Sub-  
17 committee, the Administrator may detail, on a non-  
18 reimbursable basis, personnel of FEMA to assist the  
19 Subcommittee in carrying out the duties of the Sub-  
20 committee.

21                 (2) OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES.—Upon request  
22 of the Subcommittee, any other Federal agency that  
23 is a member of the Subcommittee may detail, on a  
24 nonreimbursable basis, personnel to assist the Sub-

1 committee in carrying out the duties of the Sub-  
2 committee.

3 (h) POWERS.—In carrying out this section, the Sub-  
4 committee may hold hearings, receive evidence and assist-  
5 ance, provide information, conduct research, and author  
6 reports as the Subcommittee considers appropriate.

7 (i) TERMINATION.—The Subcommittee shall termi-  
8 nate not later than 3 years after the submission of the  
9 assessment required under subsection (c)(1).

10 (j) UPDATES AND IMPLEMENTATION.—

11 (1) IN GENERAL.—Beginning not later than 90  
12 days after the submission of the assessment under  
13 subsection (c)(1), the Administrator shall—

14 (A) coordinate the implementation of the  
15 recommendations, and actions to address the  
16 findings, as described in the assessment, where  
17 appropriate; and

18 (B) provide updates annually thereafter,  
19 until the date that is 1 year after the date on  
20 which the Subcommittee terminates, to the  
21 Committee on Homeland Security and Govern-  
22 mental Affairs of the Senate and the Committee  
23 on Homeland Security of the House of Rep-  
24 resentatives containing—

(2) FINDINGS.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter until the termination of the Subcommittee, the Administrator shall submit to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Homeland Security of the House of Representatives and make available to the public a report on the actions taken by the Administrator to incorporate and implement the findings and recommendations from the assessment described in subsection (c)(1), and any other findings and recommendations that the Subcommittee may provide, into all relevant Agency policies, plans, programs, strategies, and operations.

## **22 SEC. 8. ASSESSMENT OF CLIMATE CHANGE RISKS AND PRE- 23 PAREDNESS.**

24 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 4 years after the  
25 date of enactment of this Act, and every 4 years there-

1 after, the Administrator shall publish as a report, submit  
2 to the Committee on Homeland Security and Govern-  
3 mental Affairs of the Senate and the Committee on Home-  
4 land Security of the House of Representatives, and make  
5 available to Congress and the public, a comprehensive as-  
6 sessment of climate change risks and preparedness, which  
7 shall—

8                 (1) incorporate and expand upon the findings  
9                 and recommendations made by the Subcommittee;

10                 (2) identify, predict, and assess existing and fu-  
11                 ture natural disaster risks and impacts posed by cli-  
12                 mate change to States, cities, and communities  
13                 throughout the United States, including the current  
14                 and potential impact to annual disaster, mitigation,  
15                 and insurance costs, as well as to natural disaster  
16                 mitigation, adaptation, preparedness, response, and  
17                 recovery capabilities and efforts.

18                 (3) identify, predict, and assess risks and im-  
19                 pacts to frontline communities, particularly low-in-  
20                 come communities, communities of color, and Tribal  
21                 communities;

22                 (4) assess the current state of preparedness  
23                 throughout the emergency management community,  
24                 and across all levels of government, in relation to the

1       expected natural disaster risks and impacts posed by  
2       climate change;

3               (5) identify steps taken by FEMA to integrate  
4       climate change into all relevant Agency policies,  
5       plans, programs, strategies, and operations;

6               (6) identify measures taken by FEMA to in-  
7       crease climate change resilience, adaptation, and  
8       mitigation throughout the United States, and to in-  
9       crease overall preparedness of the entire emergency  
10      management community;

11               (7) provide recommendations and best practices  
12       for how FEMA, all relevant partners, and the emer-  
13       gency management community in the United States  
14       can better prepare for, mitigate, and adapt to the  
15       present and future national disaster risks and im-  
16       pacts posed by climate change, including specific rec-  
17       ommendations and best practices for increasing cli-  
18       mate change resilience, adaptation, and mitigation in  
19       frontline communities;

20               (8) describe climate change mitigation, adapta-  
21       tion, and resilience methods adopted in not less than  
22       5 communities across the United States, including  
23       not less than—

24                       (A) 1 urban community;

25                       (B) 1 rural community;

