

[PUBLIC LAW 875—81ST CONGRESS]—

[CHAPTER 1125—2D SESSION]

[H. R. 8396]

AN ACT

To authorize Federal assistance to States and local governments in major disasters, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That it is the intent of Congress to provide an orderly and continuing means of assistance by the Federal Government to States and local governments in carrying out their responsibilities to alleviate suffering and damage resulting from major disasters, to repair essential public facilities in major disasters, and to foster the development of such State and local organizations and plans to cope with major disasters as may be necessary.

SEC. 2. As used in this Act, the following terms shall be construed as follows unless a contrary intent appears from the context:

(a) "Major disaster" means any flood, drought, fire, hurricane, earthquake, storm, or other catastrophe in any part of the United States which, in the determination of the President, is or threatens to be of sufficient severity and magnitude to warrant disaster assistance by the Federal Government to supplement the efforts and available resources of States and local governments in alleviating the damage, hardship, or suffering caused thereby, and respecting which the governor of any State (or the Board of Commissioners of the District of Columbia) in which such catastrophe may occur or threaten certifies the need for disaster assistance under this Act, and shall give assurance of expenditure of a reasonable amount of the funds of the government of such State, local governments therein, or other agencies, for the same or similar purposes with respect to such catastrophe;

(b) "United States" includes the District of Columbia, Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands;

(c) "State" means any State in the United States, Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands;

(d) "Governor" means the chief executive of any State;

(e) "Local government" means any county, city, village, town, district, or other political subdivision of any State, or the District of Columbia;

(f) "Federal agency" means any department, independent establishment, Government corporation, or other agency of the executive branch of the Federal Government, excepting, however, the American National Red Cross.

SEC. 3. In any major disaster, Federal agencies are hereby authorized when directed by the President to provide assistance (a) by utilizing or lending, with or without compensation therefor, to States and local governments their equipment, supplies, facilities, personnel, and other resources, other than the extension of credit under the

authority of any Act; (b) by distributing, through the American National Red Cross or otherwise, medicine, food, and other consumable supplies; (c) by donating to States and local governments equipment and supplies determined under then existing law to be surplus to the needs and responsibilities of the Federal Government; and (d) by performing on public or private lands protective and other work essential for the preservation of life and property, clearing debris and wreckage, making emergency repairs to and temporary replacements of public facilities of local governments damaged or destroyed in such major disaster, and making contributions to States and local governments for purposes stated in subsection (d). The authority conferred by this Act, and any funds provided hereunder shall be supplementary to, and not in substitution for, nor in limitation of, any other authority conferred or funds provided under any other law. Any funds received by Federal agencies as reimbursement for services or supplies furnished under the authority of this section shall be deposited to the credit of the appropriation or appropriations currently available for such services or supplies. The Federal Government shall not be liable for any claim based upon the exercise or performance or the failure to exercise or perform a discretionary function or duty on the part of a Federal agency or an employee of the Government in carrying out the provisions of this section.

Sec. 4. In providing such assistance hereunder, Federal agencies shall cooperate to the fullest extent possible with each other and with States and local governments, relief agencies, and the American National Red Cross, but nothing contained in this Act shall be construed to limit or in any way affect the responsibilities of the American National Red Cross under the Act approved January 5, 1905 (33 Stat. 599), as amended.

Sec. 5. (a) In the interest of providing maximum mobilization of Federal assistance under this Act, the President is authorized to coordinate in such manner as he may determine the activities of Federal agencies in providing disaster assistance. The President may direct any Federal agency to utilize its available personnel, equipment, supplies, facilities, and other resources, in accordance with the authority herein contained.

(b) The President may, from time to time, prescribe such rules and regulations as may be necessary and proper to carry out any of the provisions of this Act, and he may exercise any power or authority conferred on him by any section of this Act either directly or through such Federal agency as he may designate.

Sec. 6. If facilities owned by the United States are damaged or destroyed in any major disaster and the Federal agency having jurisdiction thereof lacks the authority or an appropriation to repair, reconstruct, or restore such facilities, such Federal agency is hereby authorized to repair, reconstruct, or restore such facilities to the extent necessary to place them in a reasonably usable condition and to use therefor any available funds not otherwise immediately required: *Provided, however*, That the President shall first determine that the repair, reconstruction, or restoration is of such importance and urgency that it cannot reasonably be deferred pending the enactment of specific authorizing legislation or the making of an appropriation therefor. If sufficient funds are not available to such Fed-

eral agency for use in repairing, reconstructing, or restoring such facilities as above provided, the President is authorized to transfer to such Federal agency funds made available under this Act in such amount as he may determine to be warranted in the circumstances. If said funds are insufficient for this purpose, there is hereby authorized to be appropriated to any Federal agency repairing, reconstructing, or restoring facilities under authority of this section such sum or sums as may be necessary to reimburse appropriated funds to the amount expended therefrom.

Sec. 7. In carrying out the purposes of this Act, any Federal agency is authorized to accept and utilize with the consent of any State or local government, the services and facilities of such State or local government, or of any agencies, officers, or employees thereof. Any Federal agency, in performing any activities under section 3 of this Act, is authorized to employ temporarily additional personnel without regard to the civil-service laws and the Classification Act of 1923, as amended, and to incur obligations on behalf of the United States by contract or otherwise for the acquisition, rental, or hire of equipment, services, materials, and supplies for shipping, drayage, travel and communication, and for the supervision and administration of such activities. Such obligations, including obligations arising out of the temporary employment of additional personnel, may be incurred by any agency in such amount as may be made available to it by the President out of the funds specified in section 8. The President may, also, out of such funds, reimburse any Federal agency for any of its expenditures under section 3 in connection with a major disaster, such reimbursement to be in such amounts as the President may deem appropriate.

Sec. 8. There is hereby authorized to be appropriated to the President a sum or sums, not exceeding \$5,000,000 in the aggregate, to carry out the purposes of this Act. The President shall transmit to the Congress at the beginning of each regular session a full report covering the expenditure of the amounts so appropriated with the amounts of the allocations to each State under this Act. The President may from time to time transmit to the Congress supplemental reports in his discretion, all of which reports shall be referred to the Committees on Appropriations and the Committees on Public Works of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Sec. 9. The Act of July 25, 1947 (Public Law 233, Eightieth Congress), entitled "An Act to make surplus property available for the alleviation of damage caused by flood or other catastrophe", is hereby repealed.

Approved September 30, 1950.

EISENHOWER, DWIGHT D.: Records as President (White House Central Files)

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