

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
THIRD EXTRA SESSION 2018

FILED SENATE  
Oct 2, 2018  
S.B. 3  
PRINCIPAL CLERK

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SENATE BILL DRS15002-MCa-1D

Short Title: Hurricane Florence Emergency Response Act. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Britt, Meredith, Brown, B. Jackson, Rabon, Clark, D. Davis, Fitch, Lee, McInnis, Sanderson, and Smith (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED  
2 AN ACT TO ENACT THE HURRICANE FLORENCE EMERGENCY RESPONSE ACT.  
3 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

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5 **PART I. TITLE OF ACT**

6 **SECTION 1.1.** This act shall be known as "The Hurricane Florence Emergency  
7 Response Act."

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9 **PART II. LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS**

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11 **DAMAGE CAUSED BY HURRICANE FLORENCE**

12 **SECTION 2.1.(a)** The General Assembly finds that Hurricane Florence was one of  
13 the strongest storms to form in the Atlantic Ocean in the history of North Carolina, reaching wind  
14 speeds of up to 140 miles an hour and covering 500 miles; making landfall on September 14,  
15 2018; causing heavy rainfall, record flooding, high storm surge, and dozens of deaths in the State  
16 as of the date of this act; and necessitating the declaration of a State of Emergency for the State  
17 by the Governor and a Major Disaster Declaration by the President of the United States for  
18 multiple counties in the State.

19 **SECTION 2.1.(b)** The General Assembly finds that as a result of Hurricane Florence  
20 the following has occurred:

- 21 (1) Central and southeastern North Carolina suffered significant damage to public  
22 and private property.  
23 (2) Essential utility services and systems and other critical infrastructure have  
24 been seriously disrupted.  
25 (3) Over 880,000 people have lost power, thousands of people have been  
26 displaced from their homes, and 1,600 roads have been closed.  
27 (4) Riverine flooding began at the start of Hurricane Florence, and the effects  
28 continue to be felt across the State. Several large rivers reached and exceeded  
29 major flooding levels.  
30 (5) As of the date of this act, twenty-eight of the State's counties have been  
31 declared a major disaster by the President of the United States under the  
32 Stafford Act (P.L. 93-288), with others requested and pending approval.  
33 (6) North Carolinians have lost their lives, their loved ones, their homes, their  
34 communities, their schools and houses of worship, their life savings, their



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1 businesses and places of employment, their possessions, their pets, and their  
2 ways of life.

3 (7) Entire towns throughout eastern North Carolina were flooded to the rooftops  
4 as the record storm surge combined with water levels of rivers and streams  
5 crested at flood-stage heights far beyond those ever seen before in this State.

6 (8) Thirty-four states assisted North Carolina in addressing the devastation caused  
7 by Hurricane Florence.

8 (9) Thousands of emergency responders, National Guard members, and other  
9 volunteers worked to respond and assist disaster areas during and after the  
10 time the storm made landfall.

11 (10) Swift action by the General Assembly is necessary to provide relief to and  
12 facilitate recovery efforts for the citizens of North Carolina devastated from  
13 the Hurricane.

14 (11) Assessments from the damages resulting from Hurricane Florence are  
15 ongoing, and Public Assistance projects are in planning stages to repair  
16 facilities and roads, remove debris, and otherwise effectuate cleanup and  
17 repair.

18 (12) Further assistance by the General Assembly will be needed on behalf of the  
19 people and local governments who have suffered damage to public buildings,  
20 roads, wastewater treatment plants, and other critical infrastructure.

### 21 22 **PART III. CREATION OF HURRICANE FLORENCE DISASTER RECOVERY FUND**

23 **SECTION 3.1.(a)** The Hurricane Florence Disaster Recovery Fund is established.

24 The purpose of the Fund is to provide necessary and appropriate relief and assistance from the  
25 effects of Hurricane Florence, consistent with the provisions of this act, subsequent legislation  
26 addressing the effects of Hurricane Florence. The Fund shall be maintained as a special fund and  
27 administered by the Office of State Budget and Management or by another State agency, as  
28 determined by the Governor, to carry out the provisions of this and subsequent acts necessitated  
29 as a result of Hurricane Florence. All State and federal funds appropriated for Hurricane Florence  
30 relief and recovery efforts shall be budgeted and accounted for in the Fund established in this  
31 section.

32 **SECTION 3.1.(b)** Funds shall be drawn from the Fund only as needed upon  
33 justification by a State agency as evidence of the need for funds related to Hurricane Florence  
34 recovery efforts.

35 **SECTION 3.1.(c)** Funds in the Fund that are not expended, made subject to an  
36 encumbrance, or disbursed shall remain available to implement the provisions of this act and  
37 subsequent acts necessitated as a result of Hurricane Florence until the General Assembly directs  
38 the reversion of the unexpended funds. Funds received by a State agency from the Fund that are  
39 not expended, made subject to an encumbrance, or disbursed to another entity at the end of each  
40 fiscal year shall revert to the Fund. Funds received by a non-State entity from the Fund that, after  
41 three years, are not expended, made subject to an encumbrance, or disbursed to a subgrantee shall  
42 be returned to the Fund.

### 43 44 **PART IV. FUNDING OF DISASTER RELIEF**

#### 45 **APPROPRIATIONS AND ALLOCATIONS OF FUNDS FOR DISASTER RELIEF**

46 **SECTION 4.1.** Notwithstanding G.S. 143C-4-2, the State Controller shall transfer  
47 the sum of fifty-six million five hundred thousand dollars (\$56,500,000) for the 2018-2019 fiscal  
48 year from the Savings Reserve in the General Fund to the Hurricane Florence Disaster Recovery  
49 Fund and these funds are appropriated within the Fund and shall be allocated as follows:  
50

- 1 (1) Six million five hundred thousand dollars (\$6,500,000) to the Department of  
2 Public Instruction to supplement or replace lost compensation of school lunch  
3 employees due to school closures resulting from Hurricane Florence.
- 4 (2) Fifty million dollars (\$50,000,000) for the following purposes related to  
5 Hurricane Florence:  
6 a. To provide the State match for federal disaster assistance programs.  
7 b. To pay for the costs and the relief and assistance authorized by  
8 G.S. 166A-19.42(b). This sub-subdivision applies to the North  
9 Carolina counties that are or become designated under a major disaster  
10 declaration by the President of the United States under the Stafford  
11 Act (P.L. 93-288) as a result of Hurricane Florence.  
12

13 **EACH APPROPRIATION AND ALLOCATION IS MAXIMUM AND CONDITIONAL**

14 **SECTION 4.2.** The appropriations and allocations made in this act are for maximum  
15 amounts necessary to implement this act. Savings shall be effected where the total amounts  
16 appropriated or allocated are not required to implement this act.  
17

18 **APPROPRIATION OF FEDERAL FUNDS**

19 **SECTION 4.3.** Appropriation/Federal Funds. – Funds received on or after  
20 September 13, 2018, under the federal Stafford Act (P.L. 93-288) and other federal disaster  
21 assistance programs for State disasters as a result of Hurricane Florence are appropriated in the  
22 amounts provided in the notifications of award from the federal government or any entity acting  
23 on behalf of the federal government to administer federal disaster recovery funds. The Office of  
24 State Budget and Management and affected State agencies shall report all notifications of award  
25 to the Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations and the Fiscal Research  
26 Division of the General Assembly.  
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28 **PART V. IMPLEMENTATION OF ACT**

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30 **INVOLVEMENT OF HISTORICALLY UNDERUTILIZED BUSINESSES**

31 **SECTION 5.1.** It is the intent of the General Assembly that, during this time of  
32 rebuilding and relief efforts, each State agency should strive to acquire goods and services from  
33 historically underutilized business vendors, whether directly as principal contractors or indirectly  
34 as subcontractors or otherwise.  
35

36 **LEGISLATIVE REVIEW OF FEDERAL FUNDING AND REMAINING UNMET**  
37 **NEEDS**

38 **SECTION 5.2.** It is the intent of the General Assembly to review in 2018 and 2019  
39 the funds appropriated by Congress for disaster relief and to consider actions needed to address  
40 any remaining unmet needs. It is also the intent of the General Assembly to review the adequacy  
41 of the measures funded by Section 4.1 of this act at that time.  
42

43 **ELECTIONS RELIEF**

44 **SECTION 5.3.(a)** In response to Hurricane Florence and its aftermath, for the  
45 November 2018 election only, the following shall apply:

- 46 (1) Notwithstanding G.S. 163A-865(d), 163A-883, and 163A-884, applications  
47 for voter registration for the November 2018 election may be submitted until  
48 5:00 P.M. on October 15, 2018. If the application for voter registration is  
49 submitted by facsimile transmission or transmission of a scanned document,  
50 a permanent copy of the completed, signed form shall be delivered to the  
51 county board of elections no later than October 20, 2018.

1 (2) For any site that has previously been designated a one-stop site for absentee  
2 ballots to be applied for and cast during the period required by  
3 G.S. 163A-1300(b) for the November 2018 election under G.S. 163A-1303, a  
4 county board of elections by unanimous vote may provide for a substitution  
5 of the one-stop site, provided that the change is solely to substitute a one-stop  
6 site that was damaged by Hurricane Florence.

7 (3) A county board of elections may adopt a resolution altering voting places for  
8 the November 2018 election, provided that the change is solely to substitute a  
9 voting place that was damaged by Hurricane Florence. Notwithstanding  
10 G.S. 163A-1045(a) and any other notice requirements provided in statute, the  
11 county board shall provide notice of the change in location in the most  
12 expedient manner possible. This notice may be distributed through public  
13 service announcements, print, radio, television, online, and social media. If  
14 necessary to alter a voting place for a precinct that was damaged by Hurricane  
15 Florence, the county board may also make changes as provided in  
16 G.S. 163A-1047, 163A-1048, and 163A-1049.

17 **SECTION 5.3.(b)** Subsection (a) of this section (i) is effective when it becomes law,  
18 (ii) applies only in the counties designated under a major disaster declaration by the President of  
19 the United States under the Stafford Act (P.L. 93-288) as a result of Hurricane Florence as of  
20 October 2, 2018, and (iii) applies for the November 2018 election only.

21 **SECTION 5.3.(c)** County boards of elections shall educate the public, particularly  
22 individuals impacted or displaced by Hurricane Florence, about voting in the November 2018  
23 election as follows:

- 24 (1) Counties that maintain a board of elections Web site shall include information  
25 on that Web site about:  
26 a. Options to register to vote, including same day registration during the  
27 early voting period, and how to determine residency for voting  
28 purposes.  
29 b. Options to vote in the November 2018 election, including mail-in  
30 absentee voting and early one-stop voting. Information shall include  
31 locations and times of early one-stop voting.

32 (2) When publishing notices of elections under G.S. 163A-769(8) for the 2018  
33 general election, the notice shall include a brief statement regarding how to  
34 obtain information on voting for individuals impacted or displaced by  
35 Hurricane Florence.

36 **SECTION 5.3.(d)** The Bipartisan State Board of Elections and Ethics Enforcement  
37 shall educate the public, particularly individuals impacted or displaced by Hurricane Florence,  
38 about voting in the November 2018 election. The State Board shall:

- 39 (1) Include on its Web site information about:  
40 a. Options to register to vote, including same day registration during the  
41 early voting period, and how to determine residency for voting  
42 purposes.  
43 b. Options to vote in the November 2018 election, including mail-in  
44 absentee voting and early one-stop voting.

45 (2) Distribute information about the options to register to vote, including same  
46 day registration during the early voting period, and options to vote in the  
47 November 2018 election, including mail-in absentee voting and early one-stop  
48 voting to State agencies, shelters, groups, and other organizations serving  
49 persons impacted or displaced by Hurricane Florence.

50 (3) Coordinate with the State and federal agencies to identify and notify as many  
51 persons as possible displaced by Hurricane Florence about the options to

1 register to vote, including same day registration during the early voting period  
2 and options to vote in the November 2018 election, including mail-in absentee  
3 voting and early one-stop voting. When practicable, the State Board shall  
4 provide county specific information as to early one-stop voting locations and  
5 times.

6 (4) Disseminate information about the options to register to vote, including same  
7 day registration during the early voting period and options to vote in the  
8 November 2018 election, including mail-in absentee voting and early one-stop  
9 voting. Information may be distributed through public service  
10 announcements, print, radio, television, online, and social media.

11 (5) Assist any county board of elections altering one-stop sites and voting places  
12 for the November 2018 election under subsection (a) of this section in  
13 educating the public on the changes.

14 **SECTION 5.3.(e)** Notwithstanding G.S. 163A-1535 and G.S. 163A-1520, there is  
15 appropriated from the cash balance in Budget Code 68025 in the Bipartisan State Board of  
16 Elections and Ethics Enforcement the sum of four hundred thousand dollars (\$400,000) for the  
17 purpose of implementing this section.

### 18 **MOSQUITO VECTOR POPULATION CONTROL**

19 **SECTION 5.4.** It is the intent of the General Assembly to prevent large populations  
20 of floodwater mosquitoes from emerging following Hurricane Florence, as this could adversely  
21 impact the public health by hindering the State's response and recovery efforts and increasing the  
22 number of vector-borne illnesses. To that end, the General Assembly encourages the Department  
23 of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health, to continue to work with local health  
24 departments to expedite mosquito control efforts in counties that are or become part of a disaster  
25 declaration by the President of the United States under the Stafford Act (P.L. 93-288) as a result  
26 of Hurricane Florence. For purposes of this section, mosquito control efforts include mosquito  
27 abatement activities, integrated mosquito management activities, education regarding mosquito  
28 bite avoidance, and the purchase and distribution of materials for personal prevention measures.

### 30 **WAIVER OF CERTAIN DMV FEES**

31 **SECTION 5.5.(a)** Notwithstanding G.S. 20-14, 20-37.7, 20-85, and 20-88.03, the  
32 Governor may waive any fees assessed by the Division of Motor Vehicles under those sections  
33 for the following:  
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- 35 (1) A duplicate drivers license, duplicate commercial drivers license, or duplicate  
36 special identification card.
- 37 (2) A special identification card issued to a person for the first time.
- 38 (3) An application for a duplicate or corrected certificate of title.
- 39 (4) A replacement registration plate.
- 40 (5) An application for a duplicate registration card.
- 41 (6) Late payment of a motor vehicle registration renewal fee.

42 **SECTION 5.5.(b)** The waiver authorized under subsection (a) of this section only  
43 applies to residents of counties impacted by Hurricane Florence, as determined by the Governor.  
44 A resident is allowed a refund of any fee assessed and collected by the Division of Motor Vehicles  
45 and waived pursuant to this section. The Division shall post notice of the availability of a refund  
46 on its Web site.

47 **SECTION 5.5.(c)** This section is effective when it becomes law and applies to fees  
48 assessed or collected on or after September 13, 2018. This section expires December 31, 2018.

### 49 **WAIVER OF HOMEOWNERS RECOVERY FEE**

1           **SECTION 5.6.(a)** Notwithstanding G.S. 87-15.6, the Governor may waive the fee  
2 assessed by city and county building inspectors and credited to the Homeowners Recovery Fund  
3 for the reimbursement of homeowners suffering reimbursable losses in constructing or altering a  
4 single-family residential dwelling unit.

5           **SECTION 5.6.(b)** The waiver authorized under subsection (a) of this section only  
6 applies to residents of counties impacted by Hurricane Florence, as determined by the Governor.  
7 A permit applicant is allowed a refund of any fee assessed and collected by city and county  
8 building inspectors and waived pursuant to this section. A city or county subject to this section  
9 shall post notice of the availability of a refund on its Web site.

10           **SECTION 5.6.(c)** This section is effective when it becomes law and applies to  
11 applications for issuance of a permit subject to the Homeowners Recovery Fund fee that were  
12 received on or after September 13, 2018. This section expires December 31, 2018.

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14 **ADDITIONAL LIMITATIONS ON USE OF FUNDS**

15           **SECTION 5.7.** The Governor shall ensure that funds appropriated in this act are  
16 expended in a manner that does not adversely affect any person's or entity's eligibility for federal  
17 funds that are made available, or that are anticipated to be made available, as a result of Hurricane  
18 Florence. The Governor shall also, to the extent practicable, avoid using State funds to cover  
19 costs that will be, or likely will be, covered by federal funds.

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21 **PART VI. EFFECTIVE DATE**

22           **SECTION 6.1.** Except as otherwise provided, this act is effective when it becomes  
23 law.