



AMERICAN PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION ASSOCIATION
FACT SHEET
FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION EMERGENCY RELIEF PROGRAM
November 25, 2024

Summary

Over the past decade, natural disasters, including floods, hurricanes, wildfires, and earthquakes, have directly impacted many public transit agencies. Transit agencies have provided emergency transportation services and sustained significant damage to capital assets.

The Public Transportation Emergency Relief program enables the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to provide financial assistance to public transit agencies and other recipients in the aftermath of a declared emergency or major disaster.¹

On November 18, President Biden sent a letter to Speaker of the House of Representatives Mike Johnson (R-LA) requesting urgently needed emergency funding “to provide for an expeditious and meaningful Federal response to Hurricanes Helene and Milton and other natural disasters.” The request includes **\$57.5 million** to help public transit agencies recover from natural disasters.

On November 25, APTA President and CEO Paul Skoutelas sent a letter to House and Senate Appropriations Committee leaders urging Congress to **appropriate at least \$57.5 million of emergency appropriations to the FTA Public Transportation Emergency Relief program (49 U.S.C. § 5324)** to help public transit agencies offset the significant costs of providing emergency transportation services, rebuilding damaged infrastructure, and replacing vehicles destroyed by Hurricanes Helene and Milton, and other recent natural disasters.

Since 2012, Congress has **provided \$11.4 billion to 17 States, Washington, DC, and three Territories²** to help public transit agencies respond to and recover from natural disasters. Congress has appropriated emergency funds to the FTA Public Transportation Emergency Relief program in four separate Acts of Congress:

- **\$10.9 billion** for Hurricane Sandy (Disaster Relief Appropriations Act);
- **\$330 million** for Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria (Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018);
- **\$10.5 million** for the Alaska Earthquake, Hurricane Michael and other 2018 natural disasters (Additional Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Act of 2019); and

¹ See 49 U.S.C. § 5324.

² Alaska, California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Washington, D.C., the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

- **\$213.9 million** for declared major disasters occurring in calendar years 2017, 2020, 2021, and 2022 (Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023).

Background

The Public Transportation Emergency Relief program,³ established under the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21),⁴ enables FTA to provide financial assistance to public transit agencies and other recipients to respond to and recover from a declared emergency or major disaster.⁵

Since 2012, Congress has **provided \$11.4 billion to 17 States, Washington, DC, and three Territories**⁶ to help public transit agencies respond to and recover from natural disasters. Congress has appropriated emergency funds to the FTA Public Transportation Emergency Relief program in four separate Acts of Congress:

- **\$10.9 billion** for Hurricane Sandy (Disaster Relief Appropriations Act);
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- **\$10.5 million** for the Alaska Earthquake, Hurricane Michael and other 2018 natural disasters (Additional Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Act of 2019); and
- **\$213.9 million** for declared major disasters occurring in calendar years 2017 and 2020-2022 (Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023).

Disaster Relief Appropriations Act

Under the Disaster Relief Appropriations Act,⁷ Congress provided **\$10.9 billion**⁸ for FTA's Public Transportation Emergency Relief program for recovery, relief, and resilience efforts in areas affected by Hurricane Sandy. Approximately \$10.2 billion remained available after implementation of the Budget Control Act of 2011⁹ and after intergovernmental transfers to

³ 49 U.S.C. § 5324.

⁴ Pub. L. No. 112-141 (2012).

⁵ See FTA, Emergency Relief Manual, Reference Manual for States and Transit Agencies on Response and Recovery from Declared Disasters and FTA's Emergency Relief Program (49 U.S.C 5324) Version 2.0 (March 2023).

⁶ Alaska, California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Missouri, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Washington, D.C., the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

⁷ Pub. L. No. 113-2 (2013).

⁸ FTA is reserving \$50 million for latent damages, damages not assessed in smaller areas, cost increases, and additional Emergency Relief needs that exceed the amounts made available in this notice. FTA may update allocations without further notice based on revised validated damage assessments. 83 Fed. Reg. 25104 (May 31, 2018).

⁹ Pub. L. No. 112-25 (2011).

other bureaus and offices within the U.S. Department of Transportation. FTA allocated approximately \$10.1 billion to public transit agencies in multiple tiers to affected areas.

Public transit agencies in seven States and Washington, DC received emergency funding to respond to and recover from Hurricane Sandy: Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Washington, DC. View [FTA's allocations](#) pursuant to the Act.¹⁰

Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018

Under the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018,¹¹ Congress provided **\$330 million** for FTA's Emergency Relief program for recovery, relief, and resilience efforts in areas affected by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria.

Public transit agencies in five States and two Territories received emergency relief funding to respond to and recover from Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria: Florida, Georgia, Texas, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. View FTA's [first](#) and [second](#) allocations pursuant to the Act.

Additional Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Act of 2019

Under the Additional Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Act, 2019,¹² Congress provided **\$10.5 million**¹³ for FTA's Emergency Relief program for recovery, relief, and resilience efforts in areas affected by the Alaska Earthquake, Hurricane Michael, and other natural disasters that occurred in 2018.

Public transit agencies in four States and one Territory received emergency relief funding to respond to and recover from 2018 natural disasters: Alaska, Florida, North Carolina, South Carolina, and the Northern Mariana Islands. View [FTA's allocations](#) pursuant to the Act.

Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023

Under the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023,¹⁴ Congress provided **\$213.9 million** for FTA's Emergency Relief program for response, recovery, and rebuilding activities for declared major disasters in 2017, 2020, 2021, and 2022.

Public transit agencies in eight States and one Territory received emergency relief funding to respond to and recover from 2017, 2020, 2021, and 2022 natural disasters, including Hurricanes Ian, Ida, Maria, and Zeta, and damaging storms and flooding in summer 2022, and the winter

¹⁰ Recovery funds from NY-44-X004 in the total amount of \$2,125,000 are reserved for future Hurricane Sandy projects. See FTA, [Funding Allocations for Hurricane Sandy Recovery and Resiliency](#) (December 2023).

¹¹ Pub. L. No. 115-123 (2018).

¹² Pub. L. No. 116-20 (2019).

¹³ The Additional Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Relief Act of 2019 (Disaster Relief Act) (Pub. L. 116-20) appropriated \$10,542,000 (\$10,462,935 available after 0.75% administrative takedown).

¹⁴ Pub. L. No. 117-328 (2022).

storm of 2021: California, Florida, Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, New York, Texas, and Puerto Rico. View FTA's [first](#) and [second](#) allocations pursuant to the Act.