

AMENDMENT NO. _____ Calendar No. _____

Purpose: In the nature of a substitute.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES—117th Cong., 2d Sess.

S. 1617

To modify the requirements for the Administrator of the Small Business Administration relating to declaring a disaster in a rural area, and for other purposes.

Referred to the Committee on _____ and
ordered to be printed

Ordered to lie on the table and to be printed

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE intended
to be proposed by Mr. RISCH

Viz:

1 Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the fol-
2 lowing:

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Disaster Assistance
5 for Rural Communities Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. DISASTER DECLARATION IN RURAL AREAS.**

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 7(b) of the Small Busi-
8 ness Act (15 U.S.C. 636(b)) is amended by inserting after
9 paragraph (15) the following:

10 “(16) DISASTER DECLARATION IN RURAL
11 AREAS.—

1 “(A) DEFINITIONS.—In this paragraph—

2 “‘(i) the term ‘rural area’ means any
3 county or other political subdivision of a
4 State, the District of Columbia, or a terri-
5 tory or possession of the United States
6 that is designated as a rural area by the
7 Bureau of the Census; and

8 “‘(ii) the term ‘significant damage’
9 means, with respect to property, uninsured
10 losses of not less than 40 percent of the es-
11 timated fair replacement value or pre-dis-
12 aster fair market value of the damaged
13 property, whichever is lower.

14 “(B) DISASTER DECLARATION.—For the
15 purpose of making loans under paragraph (1)
16 or (2), the Administrator may declare a disaster
17 in a rural area for which a major disaster was
18 declared by the President under section 401 of
19 the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and
20 Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5170)
21 and for which individual assistance was not au-
22 thorized under section 408 of such Act (42
23 U.S.C. 5174) if—

24 “(i) the Governor of the State or the
25 Chief Executive of the Indian tribal gov-

1 ernment in which the rural area is located
2 requests such a declaration; and

3 “(ii) any home, small business con-
4 cern, private nonprofit organization, or
5 small agricultural cooperative has incurred
6 significant damage in the rural area.

7 “(C) SBA REPORT.—Not later than 120
8 days after the date of enactment of this para-
9 graph, and every year thereafter, the Adminis-
10 trator shall submit to the Committee on Small
11 Business and Entrepreneurship of the Senate
12 and the Committee on Small Business of the
13 House of Representatives a report on, with re-
14 spect to the 1-year period preceding submission
15 of the report—

16 “(i) any economic injury that resulted
17 from a major disaster declared by the
18 President under section 401 of the Robert
19 T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency
20 Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5170) in a rural
21 area;

22 “(ii) each request for assistance made
23 by the Governor of a State or the Chief
24 Executive of an Indian tribal government
25 under subparagraph (B)(i) and the re-

1 sponse of the Administrator, including the
2 timeline for each response; and

3 “(iii) any regulatory changes that will
4 impact the ability of communities in rural
5 areas to obtain disaster assistance under
6 this subsection.”.

7 (b) REGULATIONS.—Not later than 120 days after
8 the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator of
9 the Small Business Administration shall issue regulations
10 to carry out the amendment made by subsection (a).

11 (c) GAO REPORT.—

12 (1) DEFINITION OF RURAL AREA.—In this sub-
13 section, the term “rural area” means any county or
14 other political subdivision of a State, the District of
15 Columbia, or a territory or possession of the United
16 States that is designated as a rural area by the Bu-
17 reau of the Census.

18 (2) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the
19 date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller Gen-
20 eral of the United States shall submit to the Com-
21 mittee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship of
22 the Senate and the Committee on Small Business of
23 the House of Representatives a report on—

24 (A) any unique challenges that commu-
25 nities in rural areas face compared to commu-

1 nities in urbanized areas when seeking to obtain
2 disaster assistance under section 7(b) of the
3 Small Business Act (15 U.S.C. 636(b)); and

4 (B) legislative recommendations for im-
5 proving access to disaster assistance for com-
6 munities in rural areas.