

EMPOWERING THE U.S. FIRE ADMINISTRATION ACT

MAY 6, 2022.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Ms. JOHNSON of Texas, from the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany H.R. 7077]

The Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 7077) to require the United States Fire Administration to conduct on-site investigations of major fires, and for other purposes, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon with an amendment and recommends that the bill as amended do pass.

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I. AMENDMENT

The amendment is as follows:

Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Empowering the U.S. Fire Administration Act”.

SEC. 2. FIRE INVESTIGATIONS.

The Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. 2201 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“SEC. 38. INVESTIGATION AUTHORITIES.

“(a) **IN GENERAL.**—In the case of any major fire, the Administrator may send incident investigators, which may include safety specialists, fire protection engineers, codes and standards experts, researchers, and fire training specialists, to the site of the fire to conduct an investigation as described in subsection (b).

“(b) **INVESTIGATION REQUIRED.**—A fire investigation conducted under this section—

“(1) shall be conducted in coordination and cooperation with appropriate Federal, State, and local authorities, including Federal agencies that are authorized to investigate a major fire or an incident of which the major fire is a part; and

“(2) shall examine the determined cause and origin of the fire and assess broader systematic matters to include use of codes and standards, demographics, structural characteristics, smoke and fire dynamics (movement) during the event, and costs of associated injuries and deaths.

“(c) **REPORT.**—Upon concluding any fire investigation under this section, the Administrator shall issue a public report to local, State, and Federal authorities on the findings of such investigation, or collaborate with another investigating Federal agency on that agency’s report, including recommendations on—

“(1) any other buildings with similar characteristics that may bear similar fire risks;

“(2) improving tactical response to similar fires;

“(3) improving civilian safety practices;

“(4) assessing the costs and benefits to the community of adding fire safety features; and

“(5) how to mitigate the causes of such fire.

“(d) **DISCRETIONARY AUTHORITY.**—In addition to investigations conducted pursuant to subsection (a), the Administrator may send fire investigators to conduct investigations at the site of any fire with unusual or remarkable context that results in losses less severe than those occurring as a result of a major fire, in coordination with appropriate Federal, State, and local authorities, including Federal agencies that are authorized to investigate a major fire or an incident of which the major fire is a part.

“(e) **MAJOR FIRE DEFINED.**—For purposes of this section, the term ‘major fire’ shall have the meaning given such term under regulations to be issued by the Administrator.”.

II. PURPOSE OF THE BILL

The purpose of the bill is to require the United States Fire Administration to conduct on-site investigations of major fires.

III. BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR THE LEGISLATION

The U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) is an entity of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The mission of the U.S. Fire Administration is to support and strengthen fire and emergency medical services and stakeholders and to prepare for, prevent, mitigate and respond to all hazards.

The U.S. Fire Administration currently does not have the authority to conduct on-site investigations of major fires. As a result, USFA is limited in its ability to fully utilize its expertise following major fires in coordination with local, State and other Federal authorities.

According to FEMA, between 2017–2019, an estimated 368,500 residential building fires were reported to fire departments within

the U.S. each year. These fires caused an estimated 2,770 deaths, 11,650 injuries and 8.1 billion dollars in property loss.

IV. COMMITTEE HEARINGS

Pursuant House rule XIII clause 3(c)(6), the Committee designates the following hearings as having been used to develop or consider the legislation:

On June 29, 2021, the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology held a hearing entitled “The State of Federal Wildland Fire Science: Examining Opportunities for Further Research and Coordination.” The purpose of the hearing was to discuss the current state of wildland fire research, with a focus on how to improve understanding of on the ground conditions as well as to examine research gaps and additional federal coordination, investment and engagement needed to improve wildland fire prediction, management, and post-fire response. The hearing witnesses included Dr. Craig Clements, Professor of Meteorology and Director of the Wildfire Interdisciplinary Research Center, San José State University; Dr. Jessica McCarty, Assistant Professor of Geography and Director of the Geospatial Analysis Center, Miami University; Mr. George Geissler, State Forester and Deputy, Wildland Fire and Forest Health and Resiliency, Washington Department of Natural Resources; and Fire Chief Erik Litzenberg (Ret.), Chair, Wildland Fire Policy Committee, International Association of Fire Chiefs.

On June 12, 2020, the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology held a hearing entitled “The Role of AFG and SAFER Grants in COVID–19 Response.” The purpose of the hearing was to discuss the impact of COVID–19 on the fire service community, to examine the implementation of supplemental funding for the Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) program provided under the *CARES Act*, and to explore the need for additional funding and temporary administrative changes to the AFG and Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response (SAFER) grant program in order to expedite assistance to fire departments for personal protective equipment, staffing, and other needs. The hearing witnesses included Chief Gary Ludwig, President and Chairman of the Board, International Association of Fire Chiefs; Mr. Roy L. “Sandy” McGhee, III, District 11 Vice President, International Association of Fire Fighters; and Mr. Steve Hirsch, Chair, National Volunteer Fire Council.

V. COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION AND VOTES

On March 15, 2022, Representatives Ritchie Torres, Haley Stevens, Peter Meijer, and Anthony Gonzalez introduced H.R. 7077, the *Empowering the U.S. Fire Administration Act*. The bill was referred to the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

On April 5, 2022, the Full Committee on Science, Space, and Technology met to consider the bill. Mr. Posey offered an amendment to ensure the U.S. Fire Administration coordinates and operates with Federal, State, and local authorities. *The amendment was agreed to on a voice vote.* The Chair moved that the Committee favorably report H.R. 7077, as amended, to the House with the recommendation that the bill be approved. *The motion was agreed to by a voice vote.*

VI. SUMMARY OF MAJOR PROVISIONS OF THE BILL

Authorizes the U.S. Fire Administration to send incident investigators to the site of a major fire to conduct an investigation, in coordination and cooperation with Federal, State, and local authorities. Requires the U.S. Fire Administration to issue a public report on the findings and recommendations from the investigation. Authorizes USFA to investigate fires with losses less severe than a major fire.

VII. SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS (BY TITLE AND SECTION)

Section 1. Short title

Section 2.

Amends the *Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974* to authorize the USFA Administrator to send incident investigators to the site of a major fire to conduct an investigation. Details the specifics of USFA's investigational authorities. Requires USFA to issue a public report, to local, State, and Federal authorities, on the findings of the investigation and recommendations generated by the investigation. Authorizes the U.S. Fire Administration to send investigators to conduct investigations of fires with unusual or remarkable characteristics resulting in losses less severe than a major fire, in coordination with other Federal agencies. Defines the term "major fire."

VIII. COMMITTEE VIEWS

The intent of this legislation is to allow the U.S. Fire Administration to fully leverage its unique expertise to contribute to what can be learned from major fires to help strengthen prevention moving forward. The Committee intends that the U.S. Fire Administration work in coordination and cooperation with Federal, State, and local authorities to conduct an investigation.

IX. COST ESTIMATE

Pursuant to clause 3(c)(2) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee adopts as its own the estimate of new budget authority, entitlement authority, or tax expenditures or revenues contained in the cost estimate prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office pursuant to section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974.

X. CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

No Cost Estimate available at time of filing.

XI. FEDERAL MANDATES STATEMENT

H.R. 7077 contains no unfunded mandates.

XII. COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee's oversight findings and recommendations are reflected in the body of this report.

XIII. STATEMENT ON GENERAL PERFORMANCE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals and objectives of H.R. 7077 are to authorize the U.S. Fire Administration to send incident investigators to the site of a major fire to conduct an investigation in coordination with Federal, State and local authorities; to require the U.S. Fire Administration to issue a public report to local, State, and Federal authorities; and to authorize the U.S. Fire Administration to send investigators to conduct an investigation of fires with unusual or remarkable characteristics resulting in losses less severe than a major fire in coordination with other Federal agencies.

XIV. FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE STATEMENT

H.R. 7077 does not create any advisory committees.

XV. DUPLICATION OF FEDERAL PROGRAMS

Pursuant to clause 3(c)(5) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee finds that no provision of H.R. 7077 establishes or reauthorizes a program of the federal government known to be duplicative of another federal program, including any program that was included in a report to Congress pursuant to section 21 of Public Law 111-139 or the most recent Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance.

XVI. EARMARK IDENTIFICATION

Pursuant to clause 9(e), 9(f), and 9(g) of rule XXI, the Committee finds that H.R. 7077 contains no earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits.

XVII. APPLICABILITY TO THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

The Committee finds that H.R. 7077 does not relate to the terms and conditions of employment or access to public services or accommodations within the meaning of section 102(b)(3) of the Congressional Accountability Act (Public Law 104-1).

XVIII. STATEMENT ON PREEMPTION OF STATE, LOCAL, OR TRIBAL LAW

This bill is not intended to preempt any state, local, or tribal law.

XIX. CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW MADE BY THE BILL, AS REPORTED

In compliance with clause 3(e) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, changes in existing law made by the bill, as reported, are shown as follows (new matter is printed in italics and existing law in which no change is proposed is shown in roman):

FEDERAL FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL ACT OF 1974

* * * * *

SEC. 38. INVESTIGATION AUTHORITIES.

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(2) improving tactical response to similar fires;

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(5) how to mitigate the causes of such fire.

(d) *DISCRETIONARY AUTHORITY.*—In addition to investigations conducted pursuant to subsection (a), the Administrator may send fire investigators to conduct investigations at the site of any fire with unusual or remarkable context that results in losses less severe than those occurring as a result of a major fire, in coordination with appropriate Federal, State, and local authorities, including Federal agencies that are authorized to investigate a major fire or an incident of which the major fire is a part.

(e) *MAJOR FIRE DEFINED.*—For purposes of this section, the term “major fire” shall have the meaning given such term under regulations to be issued by the Administrator.

XX. PROCEEDINGS OF THE FULL COMMITTEE MARKUP

MARKUPS: H.R. 3588, MATHEMATICAL AND STATISTICAL MODELING EDUCATION ACT; H.R. 3952, NOAA CHIEF SCIENTIST ACT; H.R. 6845, COMMERCIAL REMOTE SENSING AMENDMENT ACT OF 2022; H.R. 6933, COST-SHARE ACCOUNTABILITY ACT OF 2022; H.R. 7077, EMPOWERING THE U.S. FIRE ADMINISTRATION ACT

MARKUP

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE,
AND TECHNOLOGY

OF THE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

APRIL 5, 2022

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Tuesday, April 5, 2022

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Amendment Roster

H.R. 6845, the Commercial Remote Sensing Amendment Act of 2022

Amendment number	Sponsor	Summary	Page number
1	Mr. Beyer	Makes technical corrections based on agency feedback and retains a sunset date to provide for updates to annual report.	14

H.R. 3952, the NOAA Chief Scientist Act

Amendment number	Sponsor	Summary	Page number
1	Ms. Sherrill	Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute	28
2	Ms. Moore	Adds Tribal Communities	37
3	Mr. Posey	Allows the NOAA Administrator to select any person for the position of Chief Scientist if the Administrator determines they are qualified to serve in such position.	39
4	Mr. Casten	Keeps current NOAA Chief Scientist in role before next appointment.	41

H.R. 7077, the Empowering the U.S. Fire Administration Act

Amendment number	Sponsor	Summary	Page number
1	Mr. Posey	Ensures the U.S. Fire Administration coordinates and cooperates with Federal, State, and local authorities..	50

**H.R. 6845, COMMERCIAL REMOTE SENSING
AMENDMENT ACT OF 2022**

H.R. 3952, NOAA CHIEF SCIENTIST ACT

**H.R. 7077, EMPOWERING THE U.S. FIRE
ADMINISTRATION ACT**

**H.R. 3588, MATHEMATICAL AND STATISTICAL
MODELING EDUCATIONACT**

**H.R. 6933, COST-SHARE ACCOUNTABILITY ACT
OF 2022**

TUESDAY, APRIL 5, 2022

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY,
Washington, D.C.

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:04 a.m., in room 2318 of the Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Eddie Bernice Johnson [Chairwoman of the Committee] presiding.

Chairwoman JOHNSON. Thank you very much, and good morning to everyone. The Committee will come to order. And without objection, the Chair is authorized to declare a recess at any time.

Pursuant to Committee rule, the House rule XI, the Chair announces that she may postpone roll call votes.

Today, the Committee is meeting both in person and virtually. I want to announce a couple reminders to the Members about the conduct of the hearing. First, the Members and staff who are attending in person may choose to be masked, but it is not a requirement. However, any individuals with symptoms or a positive test or exposure to someone with COVID-19 should wear a mask while present.

Members who are attending virtually should keep their video feed on as long as they are present in the hearing. Members are responsible for their own microphones. And please also keep your microphones muted until you are speaking.

Finally, if Members have documents they wish to submit to the record, please email them to the Committee Clerk, whose email address was circulated prior to the meeting.

Pursuant to notice, the Committee meets to consider the following measures: H.R. 6845, the *Commercial Remote Sensing Amendment Act of 2022*; H.R. 3952, the *NOAA Chief Scientist Act*; H.R. 7077, *Empowering the U.S. Fire Administration Act*; H.R. 3588, the *Mathematical and Statistical Modeling and Education Act*; and finally, H.R. 6933, the *Cost-Share Accountability Act of 2022*. Thank you very much.

Welcome to today's markup of five bipartisan bills. The first bill we consider is H.R. 6845, the *Commercial Remote Sensing Amendment Act of 2022*, which was introduced by Ranking Member Lucas and Mr. Perlmutter. This bill would amend current statute to provide for more transparency in the U.S. commercial space remote sensing licensing process. H.R. 6845 helps provide this Committee and the Congress with the necessary information to carry out its oversight function and to monitor the implementation of regulations of the U.S. commercial remote sensing industry, including any impacts on the industry's competitiveness. H.R. 6845 is a good-government bill and helps to ensure transparency in the licensing of commercial remote sensing systems.

Next, we will consider H.R. 3952, the *NOAA Chief Scientist Act*. I want to thank our Environment Subcommittee Chairwoman Mikie Sherrill for introducing this bipartisan legislation along with Research Subcommittee Ranking Member Randy Feenstra. This legislation sets strong scientific qualifications for the Chief Scientist position. The bill outlines additional responsibilities of the Chief Scientist in NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration). It is—it also elevates the importance of the Chief Scientist and his or her role in upholding scientific integrity and advancing science and technology at the agency. And finally, the bill establishes an Office of the Chief Scientist, as well as the position of Deputy Chief Scientist. I support the passage of this *NOAA Chief Scientist Act* and urge my colleagues to do the same.

The next bill we have to mark up is H.R. 7077, *Empowering the U.S. Fire Administration Act*, sponsored by Representative Ritchie Torres and cosponsored by several Members of the Committee. This bipartisan bill authorizes the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) to conduct onsite investigations of major fires. Despite advances in fire codes, loss of life from building fires still occurs far too frequently. A tragic fire in Representative Torres' New York district in January claimed seventeen victims, including eight children. This bill would help bring to bear the expertise of the U.S. Fire Administration following major fires to contribute to what we can learn from these fires and how we can prevent them from occurring in the future. I urge my colleagues to support this important bill.

I want to thank Representatives Houlahan and Baird for sponsoring our next bill, H.R. 3588, the *Mathematical and Statistical Modeling Education Act*. Improving access to high-quality STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) education remains a top priority for this Committee. Every two years the National Assessment of Education Progress reminds us that we're—what we're doing now is not working for the majority of our Na-

tion's students. This bill will advance innovations to incorporate mathematical modeling across K through twelve curricula and ground those lessons in a real-world context. This will empower students to see mathematics as a tool they can use to solve the problems they see in their communities. We know this both increases learning and inspires more students to pursue STEM careers. I urge my colleagues to support this important bill.

Finally, we will consider H.R. 6933, the *Cost-Share Accountability Act of 2022*, which was introduced by Investigations and Oversight Subcommittee Ranking Member Mr. Obernolte and Chairman Foster. This is a commonsense bill to ensure that Congress is kept informed about instances where cost-share requirements at the Department of Energy (DOE) are reduced or eliminated. This is a straightforward, good-government bill, and I support its passage.

I look forward to a productive markup today, and I hope to be back in the hearing room very soon. I must tell you that my surgery and rehabilitation is going very well, but now I am going to pass the gavel to Ms. Lofgren, our distinguished Vice Chair—excuse me, to chair the remainder of this markup. Thank you, Chairwoman.

[The prepared statement of Chairwoman Johnson follows:]

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H.R. 6845 is a good-government bill and helps ensure transparency in the licensing of commercial remote sensing systems.

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It also elevates the importance of the Chief Scientist and his or her role in upholding scientific integrity and advancing science and technology at the agency. Finally, the bill establishes an Office of the Chief Scientist, as well as the position of Deputy Chief Scientist. I support the passage of the *NOAA Chief Scientist Act*, and urge my colleagues to do the same.

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power students to see mathematics as a tool they can use to solve the problems they see in their communities.

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I look forward to a productive markup today, and I hope to be back in the hearing room very soon. But now I am going to pass the gavel over to Ms. Lofgren to chair the remainder of this markup.

Ms. LOFGREN [presiding]. Thank you, Chairwoman Johnson. And it's—I'm glad that your recovery is going so well, and I want to thank you for your opening statement.

I will simply say that I support all of these bipartisan bills today, and I look forward to a productive markup. And I will place a full statement in the record. I now recognize the Ranking Member for any opening remarks he would like to make.

Mr. LUCAS. Thank you, and thank you, Chairwoman Johnson, for holding today's markup. And I look forward to my colleague being back at this dais with us in very short time to continue to work on the Nation's business.

This morning, we will consider five bipartisan bills. These are what I call workhorse bills instead of show-horse bills, the great examples of consensus work we can do across the aisle to improve American science and research.

Our first bill is the *Commercial Remote Sensing* bill amendment, which I sponsored, and I'll go into more detail when we consider the bill. But for now, I'd like to thank Representative Perlmutter for working with me to support this growing industry.

Next on the docket is a bill to codify the role of Chief Scientist at NOAA. The Chief Scientist plays an important role at NOAA, advising the Administrator, providing scientific advice, and leading scientific integrity efforts. The Chief Scientist has long been a critical position at NOAA, and this bill simply recognizes the value of that role by making its current duties and responsibilities law. It also places a process in place for naming an acting Chief Scientist when the role is empty. In short, it ensures NOAA and its leadership will continue to receive the best scientific advice as they conduct all of NOAA's important missions around environmental and weather research, monitoring, prediction, and restoration. I'd like to thank Representative Sherrill for sponsoring this bill and Representative Feenstra for leading the Republican side.

Next up is a bill to empower the U.S. Fire Administration. The Fire Administration is housed within FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency), and it helps to strengthen our ability to prevent and respond to fires through research and education. This bill will make it easier for the U.S. Fire Administration to provide their expertise to local authorities by granting it the authority to spend specialists, researchers, investigators, fire protection engineers to assist with investigations of major fires. The U.S. Fire Administration has valuable resources in preventing, responding to, and investigating fires, and this bill ensures that State and local governments can access their knowledge and hopefully prevent major fires

in the future. I want to thank Representative Torres for his work on this, as well as the original cosponsors from our Committee, Representative Stevens, Meijer, and Gonzalez.

Following that bill, we'll consider the *Mathematical and Statistical Modeling Education Act*, which will help improve STEM education for U.S. students. Mathematics and statistical modeling is a skill set with broad applications across all STEM fields and even the social sciences. Statistical modeling can help us describe past events, understand current developments, and predict future outcomes. Teaching advanced modeling will prepare students to work with complex data sets. That in turn sets us up for more competitive, flexible work force. I'd like to express my appreciation to Representative Houlihan and Representative Baird for bringing this before the Committee.

Finally, we'll consider the *Cost-Share Accountability Act*. This is a good-government bill meant to improve accountability and transparency. It requires the Department of Energy to submit reports to Congress detailing when it has decided to modify or eliminate cost-sharing requirements for its research, development, demonstration, and commercial application activities. It doesn't hinder DOE's ability to modify cost-sharing requirements when necessary. Instead, it just makes those decisions transparent and publicly available. This in turn makes it easier for Congress to conduct oversight. It's a smart policy, and I thank Representative Obernolte for developing this bill following oversight hearings on this authority last year and Representative Foster for working across the aisle with him. I'm looking forward to a relatively quick markup today because of the bipartisan nature and thorough vetting of each bill under consideration.

With that, I'll end my remarks so we can get back to work. Thank you, Madam Chair.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Lucas follows:]

Thank you, Chairwoman Johnson, for holding today's markup. This morning we will consider five bipartisan bills. These are what I'd call workhorse bills instead of show horse bills. They're great examples of the consensus work we can do across the aisle to improve American science and research.

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Next on the docket is a bill to codify the role of Chief Scientist at NOAA. The Chief Scientist plays an important role at NOAA, advising the Administrator, providing scientific advice, and leading scientific integrity efforts. The Chief Scientist has long been a critical position at NOAA, and this bill simply recognizes the value of that role by making its current duties and responsibilities law. It also puts a process in place for naming an acting Chief Scientist when the role is empty. In short, it ensures NOAA and its leadership will continue to receive the best scientific advice as they conduct all of NOAA's important missions around environmental and weather research, monitoring, prediction, and restoration. I'd like to thank Representative Sherrill for sponsoring this bill and Representative Feenstra for leading the Republican side.

Next up is a bill to empower the U.S. Fire Administration. The Fire Administration is housed within FEMA and it helps strengthen our ability to prevent and respond to fires through research and education. This bill will make it easier for the U.S. Fire Administration to provide their expertise to local authorities by granting it the authority to send specialists, researchers, investigators, and fire protection engineers to assist with investigations of major fires. The U.S. Fire Administration has valuable resources in preventing, responding to, and investigating fires and this bill ensures that state and local governments can access their knowledge and - hopefully - prevent major fires in the future. I'd like to thank Representative Torres for his

work on this, as well as the original cosponsors from our Committee - Representatives Stevens, Meijer, and Gonzalez.

Following that bill, we'll consider the *Mathematical and Statistical Modeling Education Act*, which will help improve STEM education for U.S. students. Mathematical and statistical modeling is a skillset with broad applications across all STEM fields and even the social sciences. Statistical modeling can help us describe past events, understand current developments, and predict future outcomes. Teaching advanced modeling will prepare students to work with complex data sets. That in turn sets us up for a more competitive, flexible workforce. I appreciate Representative Houlahan and Representative Baird for bringing this before the Committee.

Finally, we'll consider the *Cost-Share Accountability Act*. This is a good-government bill meant to improve accountability and transparency. It requires the Department of Energy to submit reports to Congress detailing when it has decided to modify or eliminate cost-sharing requirements for its research, development, demonstration, and commercial application activities. It doesn't hinder DOE's ability to modify cost-sharing requirements when necessary - instead, it just makes those decisions transparent and publicly available. This in turn makes it easier for Congress to conduct oversight. It's smart policy, and I thank Representative Obernolte for developing this bill following oversight hearings on this authority last year, and Representative Foster for working across the aisle with him.

I'm looking forward to a relatively quick markup today because of the bipartisan nature and thorough vetting of each bill under consideration. With that, I'll end my remarks so we can get to work.

Ms. LOFGREN. Thank you, Mr. Ranking Member.

Other Members are—may put their opening remarks into the record.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Lofgren follows:]

Good morning everyone, I'm glad to begin this markup of five bipartisan bills. Today we will consider H.R. 6845, the *Commercial Remote Sensing Amendment Act of 2022*; H.R. 3952, the *NOAA Chief Scientist Act*; H.R. 7077, the *Empowering the U.S. Fire Administration Act*; H.R. 3588, the *Mathematical and Statistical Modeling Education Act*; and H.R. 6933, the *Cost-Share Accountability Act of 2022*.

Ranking Member Lucas and Mr. Perlmutter's H.R. 6845, the *Commercial Remote Sensing Amendment Act of 2022*, will help to bring more transparency in our U.S. commercial space remote licensing process. This bill will allow for this Committee and Congress to carry out its critical oversight function of the U.S. commercial remote sensing industry and will build transparency in the licensing of these systems.

Up next is H.R. 3952, the *NOAA Chief Scientist Act*. This legislation was introduced by Chairwoman Mikie Sherrill of the Subcommittee on Environment and Research and Technology Subcommittee Ranking Member Randy Feenstra. This bill will help shape a strong Chief Scientist position at NOAA, and emphasizes the importance of upholding scientific integrity. The bill also establishes both an Office of the Chief Scientist and the position of Deputy Chief Scientist. As a Members of this Committee, we understand how critically important it is to uphold scientific integrity, especially at our federal science facilities.

Third we will consider H.R. 7077, the *Empowering the U.S. Fire Administration Act*, which was sponsored by Representative Ritchie Torres of New York. This bipartisan bill will authorize the U.S. Fire Administration to conduct investigations of major fires on-site. We must be able to learn from tragic events like fires so we can work to make sure they don't happen again, and this bill will help to do just that.

Next will be H.R. 3588, the *Mathematical and Statistical Modeling Education Act*. This bill was brought forth by Representatives Houlahan and Baird to coordinate Federal research and development efforts to help scale up and modernize STEM education through mathematical and statistical modeling. In order to build a strong and diverse STEM workforce, we have to ensure students are well-equipped with the evolving needs of the future.

The last bill we will consider today is H.R. 6933, the *Cost-Share Accountability Act of 2022*. This bill, which was introduced by Investigations and Oversight Subcommittee Ranking Member Obernolte and Chairman Foster, will ensure Congress stays up to date on information regarding changes in cost-share requirements at the Department of Energy.

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I'm confident we have a productive markup in front of us. From upholding scientific integrity at NOAA, making sure we learn from major fires and work to prevent them, improving access to high-quality STEM education, and more, we have five great bills to consider. I'm looking forward to moving each of these bills through the Committee today.

Thank you.

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quent calendar days in which to submit supplemental minority or additional views on the measure.

Ms. LOFGREN. We will now consider H.R. 7077, the *Empowering the U.S. Fire Administration Act*. The Clerk will report the bill.

The CLERK. H.R. 7077, a bill—

[The bill follows:]

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 7077

To require the United States Fire Administration to conduct on-site investigations of major fires, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 15, 2022

Mr. TORRES of New York (for himself, Ms. STEVENS, Mr. MELJER, and Mr. GONZALEZ of Ohio) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

A BILL

To require the United States Fire Administration to conduct on-site investigations of major fires, 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 “Empowering the U.S.
5 Fire Administration Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FIRE INVESTIGATIONS.**

7 The Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974
8 (15 U.S.C. 2201 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end
9 the following:

1 **“SEC. 38. INVESTIGATION AUTHORITIES.**

2 “(a) IN GENERAL.—In the case of any major fire,
3 the Administrator may send incident investigators, which
4 may include safety specialists, fire protection engineers,
5 codes and standards experts, researchers, and fire training
6 specialists, to the site of the fire to conduct an investiga-
7 tion as described in subsection (b).

8 “(b) INVESTIGATION REQUIRED.—A fire investiga-
9 tion conducted under this section—

10 “(1) shall be conducted in coordination with ap-
11 propriate Federal, State, and local authorities, in-
12 cluding Federal agencies that are authorized to in-
13 vestigate a major fire or an incident of which the
14 major fire is a part; and

15 “(2) shall examine the determined cause and
16 origin of the fire and assess broader systematic mat-
17 ters to include use of codes and standards, demo-
18 graphics, structural characteristics, smoke and fire
19 dynamics (movement) during the event, and costs of
20 associated injuries and deaths.

21 “(c) REPORT.—Upon concluding any fire investiga-
22 tion under this section, the Administrator shall issue a
23 public report to local, State, and Federal authorities on
24 the findings of such investigation, or collaborate with an-
25 other investigating Federal agency on that agency’s re-
26 port, including recommendations on—

1 “(1) any other buildings with similar character-
2 istics that may bear similar fire risks;

3 “(2) improving tactical response to similar fires;

4 “(3) improving civilian safety practices;

5 “(4) assessing the costs and benefits to the
6 community of adding fire safety features; and

7 “(5) how to mitigate the causes of such fire.

8 “(d) DISCRETIONARY AUTHORITY.—In addition to
9 investigations conducted pursuant to subsection (a), the
10 Administrator may send fire investigators to conduct in-
11 vestigations at the site of any fire with unusual or remark-
12 able context that results in losses less severe than those
13 occurring as a result of a major fire, in coordination with
14 appropriate Federal, State, and local authorities, including
15 Federal agencies that are authorized to investigate a
16 major fire or an incident of which the major fire is a part.

17 “(e) MAJOR FIRE DEFINED.—For purposes of this
18 section, the term ‘major fire’ shall have the meaning given
19 such term under regulations to be issued by the Adminis-
20 trator.”.

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Ms. LOFGREN. Without objection, the bill is considered as read and open to amendment at any point. And does anyone wish to be recognized to speak on the underlying bill?

Ms. Stevens, you are recognized.

Ms. STEVENS. Thank you. It is your overzealous colleague back to speak, Madam Chair, about the *Empowering the U.S. Fire Administration Act*, along with my colleagues Representative Ritchie Torres, as well as Congressman Meijer and Gonzalez. We are so thrilled to introduce this legislation.

The *Empowering the U.S. Fire Administration Act* would authorize the U.S. Fire Administration to send safety specialists, fire protection engineers, codes and standards experts, researchers, and fire training specialists to collaborate and assist local firefighter investigations in their investigations in the aftermath of a fire.

This is incredibly important legislation. It will be supporting communities like mine and Congressman Torres' that have experienced just considerable and heartbreaking fires just in the last handful of months. In particular in Michigan in Oakland County, we know that fires are up 122 percent.

Although fire loss has certainly improved significantly over the past twenty-five years, the fire problem in the United States remains serious. The United States still has one of the highest fire death rates in the industrialized world. It is clear we still have work to do to prevent these fires and their deadly consequences.

According to FEMA, between 2017 and 2019 fires caused an estimated 2,770 deaths, 11,650 injuries, and \$8.1 billion in property loss. In Michigan, we have recently experienced a significant rise in fire-related deaths during just this year, just the year of 2022. So according to the Bureau of Fire Services, fire-related deaths across Michigan increased by 144 percent in the first month of 2022 compared to 2021. Unfortunately, it was reported that these increased fires in Michigan were all preventable.

And so this is why I am joining my colleagues to invest in the resources to investigate fires and their aftermath. The *Empowering the U.S. Fire Administration Act* is part of a Federal legislative package aimed at solving the underlying issues that caused the deadly fire that my friend, my dear friend and colleague Representative Ritchie Torres experienced in his district. In January of this year, January 9th, a major fire occurred at the Twin Parks Northwest apartment building in Representative Torres' district in which 17 people, including 8 children, tragically lost their lives.

A key objective of the U.S. Fire Administration is to significantly reduce the Nation's loss of life from fire while also achieving a reduction in property loss and nonfatal injury due to fire. This bill authorizes the U.S. Fire Administration to conduct those onsite investigation of major fires. Imagine how critical this is for Congressman Torres' district and what his residents experienced, not only the loss of life but figuring out how they can get through this, how we can get through what happened in Oakland County with the— with our Oakland Hills Golf Course, a prize golf course, the second-largest wood structural building in Michigan that caught on fire.

By authorizing the USFA to send incident investigators to the site of a major fire, this bill more fully leverages the unique expertise of the USFA to contribute to what they can learn from these

fires to continue to strengthen prevention going forward and on. So this bill is going to unlock the expertise of fire safety specialists and engineers to collaborate and assist local firefighter investigators after a major fire incident in their community.

Additionally, this bill requires the USFA to issue a public report on findings of investigation to local, State, and Federal authorities. The report would also include recommendations on how to mitigate the causes of the investigative fire, as well as buildings with similar characteristics that may bear similar fire risk. If another Federal agency—

Ms. LOFGREN. Could the gentlelady pause for a second? Somebody on the Zoom is not muted. Could everybody other than Ms. Stevens please check and mute? And you are now recognized again.

Ms. STEVENS. Congresswoman Stansbury, I believe you are not muted.

OK. Thank you, Madam Chair.

If another Federal agency, for instance, NIST (National Institute of Standards and Technology), is also able to investigate the fire, the bill would encourage the agencies to collaborate on a comprehensive report. In fact, collaboration with local, State, and other Federal authorities is a central theme of the entire bill. We are ensuring USFA also has the specific authorities it needs to carry out its mission.

I want to thank again my colleagues, a bipartisan effort, Congressman Ritchie Torres, Congressman Meijer and Gonzalez for their leadership on this bill. I want to urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this critical piece of legislation. And before I yield back, Madam Chair, I would like to ask unanimous consent to enter into the record letters of support for H.R. 7077 from the International Association of Fire Chiefs and the National Association of State Fire Marshals.

Ms. LOFGREN. Without objection, those will be made part of the record.

[See Appendix for the information referred to]

Ms. LOFGREN. The gentlelady yields back. And we recognize now Mr. Meijer for—to strike the last word.

Mr. MEIJER. Thank you, Madam Chair and Ranking Member Lucas, for holding this markup today and providing us with another opportunity to work together on legislation that supports critical agencies like the U.S. Fire Administration.

I was honored to join my friend and colleague Ritchie Torres in introducing this bill, spurred from a terrible and heartbreaking tragedy in his district in New York. That fire in the Bronx apartment building left us with many questions, including why there's no coordination between the Federal U.S. Fire Administration and other State and local authorities. In fact, the U.S. Fire Administration does not have the authority to conduct onsite investigations of major fires. As a result, our State and local authorities are limited in their capacity to investigate major fires.

The U.S. Fire Administration's expertise can and should be used to the fullest extent and in coordination with all existing authorities responsible for fire investigations. That is why today's bill, H.R. 7077, *Empowering the U.S. Fire Administration Act*, is so critical. It simply addresses existing coordination gaps between the

Federal, State, and local authorities to allow the U.S. Fire Administration to send investigators such as safety specialists, fire protection engineers, codes and standards experts, and fire training specialists to the site of a major fire. These experts can then work on the ground with State and local authorities to determine cause, examine building failures, and provide answers and recommendations to those affected by these fires.

The tragedy we saw in the Bronx was heartbreaking and should have never happened. We need answers, and we need to ensure that something like this never happens again. It's long past time that we allow the experts at all levels, again, Federal, State, and local, to coordinate to help us achieve this goal.

Our bill has received support from fire departments across the country, including my hometown of Grand Rapids. Our Grand Rapids Fire Department recognizes the need to allow the full capacity to be brought to bear.

I want to thank Congressman Ritchie Torres, Ranking Member Stevens, and Congressman Anthony Gonzalez for their work with me on this bill, and I'm proud to support this and hope that it moves quickly in the House. I encourage my colleagues to support this bill. Thank you, Madam Chair. I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. LOFGREN. The gentleman yields back.

As there are no additional Members seeking recognition on the underlying bill, we will look at the roster and see the amendment that will be offered by the gentleman from Florida, Mr. Posey, who is now recognized to offer an amendment. Mr. Posey?

I think he is—he had a technical glitch. I think what we can do is offer this amendment in his behalf while he is trying to reconnect, and the Clerk will report the amendment.

The CLERK. Amendment to H.R. 7077 offered by Mr. Posey of Florida.

[The amendment of Mr. Posey follows:]

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AMENDMENT TO H.R. 7077
OFFERED BY MR. POSEY OF FLORIDA

Page 2, line 10, insert "and cooperation" after "co-ordination".



Ms. LOFGREN. While we're waiting for the gentleman, I will thank him for his amendment and for working across the aisle to come to an agreement that addresses his concerns. This amendment clarifies the USFA should work in cooperation with State and local partners on their investigation of a major fire. This amendment is consistent with the intent of the underlying bill, and I agree it can be helpful to include all of the appropriate terminology to leave no ambiguity as to intent. I would urge my colleagues to support his amendment, and I would be happy to yield to the Ranking Member.

Mr. LUCAS. Thank you, Madam Chair. And I appreciate your yield. And I wholeheartedly agree with you. Our good friend is having technical problems, one of the challenges of the world we live in. He is back. Can we yield to him, Madam Chair?

Ms. LOFGREN. Certainly. We will yield to Mr. Posey. We've already—you're on mute. The amendment is before us, and it's been called up, and I have spoken in favor and the Ranking Member has as well. So Mr. Posey, you are recognized to strike the last word.

Mr. POSEY. Well, if you two have already spoken in favor of it, I don't think I could do much better than that. I yield back. Thank you very much, both of you.

Ms. LOFGREN. The gentleman yields back.

Are there additional Members who wish to speak on this amendment?

If not then, the vote occurs on the amendment. All in favor will say aye.

Opposed will say no.

In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it.

And a reporting quorum being present, I move that the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology report 7077, as amended, to the House, with the recommendation that the bill be approved.

All those in favor of the motion will signify by saying aye.

Opposed will signify by saying no.

In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it. The bill is favorably reported.

And without objection, the motion to reconsider is laid upon the table. I ask unanimous consent that staff be authorized to make any necessary technical and conforming changes to the bill. And without objection, that is ordered. Members will have two subsequent calendar days in which to submit supplemental minority or additional views on the measure.