

**S. 4599, Disaster Assistance Simplification Act**

As ordered reported by the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs on August 3, 2022

By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars	2022	2022-2027	2022-2032
Direct Spending (Outlays)	0	0	0
Revenues	0	0	0
Increase or Decrease (-) in the Deficit	0	0	0
Spending Subject to Appropriation (Outlays)	0	36	not estimated
Statutory pay-as-you-go procedures apply?	No	<b>Mandate Effects</b>	
Increases on-budget deficits in any of the four consecutive 10-year periods beginning in 2033?	No	Contains intergovernmental mandate?	No
		Contains private-sector mandate?	No

S. 4599 would require the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to improve its website, DisasterAssistance.gov, which provides information for individuals, households, and businesses seeking access to federal disaster assistance. Many federal agencies provide information on the portal about the assistance that is available, but the website only allows applicants to apply for one FEMA program and has limited capacity for information sharing among participating agencies.

S. 4599 would require FEMA to streamline the application process by allowing individuals and businesses to apply for all available disaster assistance and to facilitate the sharing of applicant information among participating agencies. Under the bill, the portal would need to meet certain functionality requirements, such as protecting data privacy and facilitating agencies' ability to detect fraud and discrimination in the administration of assistance programs.

In 2022, FEMA allocated about \$11 million for the website, mostly for contracts with private vendors to operate the portal and supporting systems.

Using information provided by FEMA about the portal's current functionality, CBO expects that the agency would need to contract for additional technology services to develop new user interfaces and information sharing mechanisms and to enhance the website's capacity to manage, store, and secure data. CBO estimates those costs would total \$34 million over the



2022-2027 period, with most of that cost occurring in 2024 and 2025. In addition, we estimate that FEMA would need \$2 million over that period for the equivalent of three full-time employees—at an average annual cost of \$160,000—over the first three years after enactment, and two employees beginning in 2026, to oversee contractors and coordinate work on the portal among participating agencies. In total, CBO estimates that implementing the bill would cost \$36 million over the 2023-2027 period, assuming appropriation of the estimated amounts.

The costs of the legislation, detailed in Table 1, fall within budget function 450 (community and regional development).

**Table 1.**  
**Estimated Increases in Spending Subject to Appropriation Under S. 4599**

	By Fiscal Year, Millions of Dollars						2022-2027
	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	
Estimated Authorization	0	4	12	13	4	4	37
Estimated Outlays	0	4	11	12	5	4	36

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Jon Sperl. The estimate was reviewed by H. Samuel Papenfuss, Deputy Director of Budget Analysis.