



# HOUSE BILL 47: Disaster Recovery Act of 2025 - Part I.

2025-2026 General Assembly

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| <b>Committee:</b>     | House Appropriations. If favorable, re-refer to Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House | <b>Date:</b>        | February 12, 2025 |
| <b>Introduced by:</b> | Reps. Greene, Bell   | <b>Prepared by:</b> | Kyle Evans        |
| <b>Analysis of:</b>   | Second Edition   |                     | Staff Attorney    |

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**OVERVIEW:** House Bill 47 would provide additional appropriations for recovery from Hurricane Helene, extend the state of emergency, and extend certain disaster recovery regulatory and procurement flexibility provisions.

**BILL ANALYSIS:** The bill includes the following:

### PART I – TITLE AND SCOPE OF ACT

**Section 1.1** would reflect the title as "The Disaster Recovery Act of 2025 – Part I."

**Section 1.2** would state that the appropriations and allocations made in this act are for maximum amounts necessary to implement this act.

**Section 1.3** would note that this act, unless otherwise provided, applies to the North Carolina counties in the affected area, as defined in Section 1.4.

**Sections 1.4** would provide the following definitions that apply to this act: "Affected area," "CDBG-DR," "FEMA," "Helene Fund," "NCEM," "OSBM," and "SERDRF."

### PART II – DISASTER RECOVERY APPROPRIATION AND TRANSFER

**Section 2.1** would transfer \$275 million from the SERDRF to the Helene Fund.

**Section 2.2** would appropriate \$500 million from the Helene Fund in nonrecurring funds as follows:

- \$140 million to the Department of Commerce, Division of Community Revitalization for the Home Reconstruction and Repair Program (Program). The Program must be CDBG-DR compliant and consistent with HUD's Universal Notice to ensure maximum reimbursement from federal funds.
- \$75 million to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Division of Soil & Water Conservation for natural restoration projects, and engineering and technical assistance.
- \$75 million to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services for the Hurricane Helene Agricultural Crop Loss Program in accordance with Section 2.4 of this act.
- \$100 million to the Department of Public Safety, Division of Emergency Management for the Private Road and Bridge Repair and Replacement Program in accordance with Section 2.3 of this act.
- \$55 million for the Small Business Infrastructure Grant Program in accordance with Section 2.5 of this act.

Kara McCraw  
Director



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- \$20 million to OSBM to distribute to State agencies and local governments for debris removal unmet needs. The Governor's Office for Western North Carolina and NCEM shall assist OSBM in coordinating with State agencies and local shareholders.
- \$10 million to NCEM to provide grants to Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster (VOADs) assisting in the affected area.
- \$10 million to the Office of the State Fire Marshal to provide funds for repairs of damage to fire stations, and to buildings or vehicles used by rescue squads or emergency medical service providers. Any remaining funds would be distributed equally to all fire departments in the affected area to purchase equipment or make capital improvements to assist with readiness for future emergency response.
- \$10 million to the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Social Services, to supplement rental assistance payments provided in accordance with Section 4B.7 of S.L. 2024-53.
- \$5 million to the Department of Commerce for the nonprofit corporation the Department contracts with for targeted media campaigns to encourage tourism to counties in the affected area.

**Section 2.3** would establish the Private Road and Bridge Repair and Replacement Program (Program) within the Department of Public Safety, Division of Emergency Management (NCEM), to disburse grants for the repair and replacement of private roads and bridges damaged or destroyed by Hurricane Helene. NCEM would be directed to work with the Department of Transportation to administer the Program, and would develop criteria to prioritize the repair and replacement of private roads and bridges consistent with this section. NCEM would be directed to take all reasonable steps to obtain federal assistance or alternative funds prior to obligating State funds for the Program if such federal assistance or alternative funds are available and would be directed not duplicate repair efforts. Funds appropriated to NCEM for this program may also be used to provide technical support and assistance for individual and local governments to comply with the no-rise certificate requirements pursuant to FEMA under the National Flood Insurance Program.

NCEM would annually report to the Joint Emergency Management Oversight Committee and the Fiscal Research Division on the award criteria, the location of any private roads or bridges replaced, the average grant amount, the number of projects requested, declined, or funded, and the unmet needs at the end of each fiscal year for private road or bridge replacement.

**Section 2.4** would create within DACS the Hurricane Helene Agricultural Crop Loss Program (Crop Loss Program) to provide financial assistance to farmers affected by Hurricane Helene. This Crop Loss Program would be available for any person that experience a verifiable loss of an agricultural commodity or farm infrastructure for a farm located in an affected area and the commodity was planted but not harvested on or before September 24, 2024.

**Section 2.5** would establish the Small Business Infrastructure Grant Program, to be administered by the Department of Commerce, to assist small businesses by providing grants to local governments to expedite infrastructure repairs impacting the operation and patronage of small businesses in the affected area. Grants would be limited to the lesser of the estimated cost of the identified infrastructure need or \$1 million.

## **PART III – EXTENSION OF STATE OF EMERGENCY**

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**Section 3.1** would further extend the statewide declaration of emergency issued by the Governor in Executive Order No. 315 until June 1, 2025. This section also provides that the extension of Executive Order 315 has no effect on Executive Order 322, issued by the Governor on October 16, 2024, and concerning unemployment insurance benefits.

## **PART IV – GENERAL PROVISIONS**

### **REVERSION, LIMITATION, AND REPORTING OF FUNDS**

**Section 4.1.(a)** would state that, except as otherwise provided, funds appropriated under Part II of this act shall revert to the Savings Reserve if not expended or encumbered by June 30, 2030.

**Section 4.1.(b)** would state that recipients of State funds under this act shall use best efforts and take all reasonable steps to obtain alternative funds to cover losses or needs for which State funds are provided.

**Section 4.1.(c)** would state that recipients of alternative funds pursuant to Section 4.1.(b) shall remit the funds to the State agency from which the State funds were received not exceeding the amount of State funds provided to the recipient.

**Section 4.1.(d)** would require any contract or other instrument entered into for the receipt of funds to include the requirements set out in Section 4.1.(b) and Section 4.1.(c).

**Section 4.1.(e)** would prohibit the Governor from using the funds described in this act to make budget adjustments under G.S. 143C-6-4 or reallocations under G.S. 166A-19.40(c).

**Section 4.1.(f)** would direct the Governor to ensure that funds allocated in this act are expended in such a manner that does not adversely affect any person's or entity's eligibility for federal funds that are made available, or are anticipated to be made available, as a result of natural disasters and to avoid using State funds to cover costs that will, or likely will, be covered by federal funds.

**Section 4.1.(g)** would require OSBM to report to the chairs of the House of Representatives and Senate Appropriations Committees and to the Fiscal Research Division on the implementation of this act on a quarterly basis until the end of the quarter in which all funds are expended.

**Section 4.1.(h)** would provide that in any conflict between any prior reporting requirements and the reporting requirements in Section 4.1.(g) of this act, Section 4.1.(g) of this act would prevail.

## **PART V – DISASTER RECOVERY REGULATORY AND PROCUREMENT FLEXIBILITY**

**Section 5.1** would extend the expiration dates of various provisions from S.L. 2024-51 (Helene I), S.L. 2024-53 (Helene II), and S.L. 2024-57 (Helene III) from March 2025 to June 1, 2025.

**Section 5.2** would amend the funeral establishment exemption waiver for a funeral establishment damaged by a fire, weather event, or other natural disaster.

**Section 5.3** would require, in certain circumstances, roadway constructors to coordinate with broadband providers when repairing, rebuilding, or reconstructing roads on the installation of any broadband bales or equipment, and would provide that the constructor should cooperate with the broadband provider to transition any temporary installations into permanent broadband installations when certain conditions are met.

**Section 5.4** would allow the Department of Adult Correction to coordinate with the Department of Transportation to allow for the use of inmates to clean up debris resulting from Hurricane Helene on public roads and roadsides in affected areas.

**Section 5.5** would allow VOADs to purchase surplus heavy construction equipment and motor vehicles from the State through the Department of Administration (DOA) for the purpose of aiding in disaster

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recovery. This section would also provide that the Department of Administration shall loan surplus heavy construction equipment to units of local governments and VOADs for a period of five years. At the end of the five-year period, the ownership of the loaned surplus property would transfer to the unit of local government or VOAD.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** Except as otherwise provided, this act would be effective when it becomes law.

*Michael Whitfield, Legislative Analysis Division, substantially contributed to this summary.*