

STATE OF NEW YORK

1634

2019-2020 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

January 15, 2019

Introduced by Sen. BROOKS -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Insurance

AN ACT to amend the insurance law, in relation to creating a task force on disasters

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. The insurance law is amended by adding a new section 215 to
2 read as follows:

3 § 215. Task force on disasters. (a) There is hereby created a task
4 force to examine how insurers who write policies that cover loss of or
5 damage to real property, personal property, or other liabilities for
6 loss of, damage to, or injury to persons or property in New York state
7 respond to disasters, in what ways state and local agencies such as the
8 department of financial services can assist in such response and whether
9 policyholders and communities have adequate insurance.

10 (b) (1) The task force shall consist of twenty-three members, one of
11 whom shall be the superintendent or his or her designated represen-
12 tative, six of whom shall be appointed by the governor, five of whom
13 shall be appointed by the governor based upon the recommendation of the
14 speaker of the assembly, five of whom shall be appointed by the governor
15 based upon the recommendation of the temporary president of the senate,
16 three of whom shall be appointed by the governor based upon the recom-
17 mendation of the minority leader of the assembly, and three of whom
18 shall be appointed by the governor based upon the recommendation of the
19 minority leader of the senate.

20 (2) The appointees shall include representatives of the following:

21 (A) four insurers who write policies that cover loss of or damage to
22 real property, personal property, or other liabilities for loss of,
23 damage to, or injury to persons or property, including representatives
24 from companies of varying sizes and locations and at least one insurer
25 who writes for the national flood insurance program.

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 (B) ten local officials who respond to disasters and emergencies,
2 including police officials, professional and volunteer fire and emergen-
3 cy services personnel, and local officials responsible for the coordi-
4 nation of emergency services and the locality's response to a disaster
5 or emergency. These appointments shall reflect the geographic diversity
6 of the state and include representatives from localities with varying
7 population densities. These appointments shall also include represen-
8 tatives from the following regions: New York city, Long Island, mid-Hud-
9 son, capital region, north country, Mohawk Valley, Southern tier,
10 Central New York, Finger lakes, and Western New York.

11 (C) two organizations that represent independent and public adjusters.

12 (D) two non-profits that have experience with disaster relief.

13 (E) two consumer advocacy groups.

14 (F) one independent insurance agent who obtains coverage for policy
15 holders for loss of or damage to real property, personal property, or
16 other liabilities for loss of, damage to, or injury to persons or prop-
17 erty.

18 (3) Recommendations and appointments shall take into consideration the
19 expertise of other appointees, so that the task force reflects a diver-
20 sity of experience.

21 (4) The members of the task force shall not receive compensation, but
22 shall be reimbursed for reasonable travel expenses.

23 (c) The superintendent, or his or her designated representative, shall
24 serve as the chair of the task force.

25 (d) The task force shall report to the governor, the speaker of the
26 assembly, the temporary president of the senate, and the chair of the
27 assembly insurance committee and the chair of the senate insurance
28 committee on the results of its examination one year after the effective
29 date of this section. The report shall include information on the chal-
30 lenges that insurers face when responding to a disaster, possible ways
31 for insurers to work better with community stakeholders and state agen-
32 cies to facilitate timely claims investigation and processing, suggested
33 legislation to address, issues identified by the task force, and any
34 other information the superintendent deems relevant.

35 (e) In completing its task, the task force will consider the following
36 issues, as well as any other issue that it deems relevant:

37 (1) Steps insurers currently take in order to respond to disaster-re-
38 lated claims in a timely fashion;

39 (2) Challenges insurers experience when responding to disasters;

40 (3) Steps insurers currently take to adequately assess damage so that
41 homeowners and municipalities can remove debris and make repairs quick-
42 ly;

43 (4) Additional steps insurers and state and local agencies can take to
44 better respond to the needs of communities and policyholders affected by
45 a disaster;

46 (5) Ways insurers and state and local agencies can proactively reach
47 out to policyholders and communities following a disaster;

48 (6) Ways insurers assist homeowners and businesses affected by a
49 disaster whose premiums are due;

50 (7) Steps insurers can take if their employees are affected by a
51 disaster in order to ensure that they are still able to respond to
52 claims in a timely fashion;

53 (8) Whether or not New Yorkers have adequate access to insurance
54 coverage and if not, identifying what barriers exist that may prevent
55 people from purchasing adequate coverage;

1 (9) Identifying measures to encourage homeowners and businesses to
2 purchase flood insurance as needed;

3 (10) Steps insurers take to prevent disputes with policyholders and to
4 resolve those which do occur as well as additional steps insurers can
5 take;

6 (11) Legislative actions that can be considered to address such
7 issues.

8 § 2. This act shall take effect immediately.