

## **General Assembly Passes \$56.5 Million Hurricane Florence Recovery Package**

By Administrator

Wednesday, 03 October 2018 11:29 -

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Legislation to provide emergency flexibility to schools and elections boards in the aftermath of Hurricane Florence, as well as establishing a new recovery fund from the state's record savings reserve, unanimously passed the North Carolina House of Representatives on Tuesday.

Election registration deadlines were extended in the bipartisan House Bill 4 Hurricane Florence Emergency Response Act to accommodate voters displaced by the storm and local boards were given flexibility to adjust polling places, replace one-stop early voting sites, and adjust absentee ballot distributions to deal with facilities damaged by Hurricane Florence.

School districts in counties under federal disaster declarations were extended up to 20-day waivers for making up missed class time in the bipartisan Senate Bill 2 School Calendar & Pay/Hurricane Florence. Other school districts that missed class time but were not in the most hard-hit areas will only be required to make up two days of school.

The disaster relief legislation also requires school employees be compensated the same as if they had worked any scheduled instructional days deemed completed by the public school unit during September and October of 2018.

A \$56.6 million initial funding transfer was made to a new Hurricane Florence Disaster Recovery Fund to provide the state match for federal disaster assistance programs. It will also cover missed compensation for some school employees and make a down-payment on the costs of relief in North Carolina counties designated under a major disaster declaration by the President of the United States.

The legislation also allows the waiver of any fees assessed by the Division of Motor Vehicles for duplicate drivers licenses or identification cards, applications for certificates of title, registration plate replacements, applications for duplicate registration cards, and late payments of a motor vehicle registration renewal fee.

It further addresses immediate needs to mitigate and prevent large populations of floodwater mosquitoes from emerging in the aftermath of Hurricane Florence. Those mosquito control efforts include mosquito abatement activities, integrated mosquito management activities, education regarding mosquito bite avoidance, and distribution of materials for prevention measures.

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The legislation directs state agencies to strive to acquire goods and services from historically underutilized business vendors, whether directly as principal contractors or indirectly as subcontractors.

State House Speaker Tim Moore (R-Cleveland) thanked his colleagues for the bipartisan effort in response to the storm and recalled his damage assessments with representatives in regions impacted by Florence.

"Every one of you, I've seen what you do and mean to your communities, and I thank you for your service to millions of North Carolinians," Moore said.

"It's always good to see partisanship and some of the crazy divisions we let ourselves get into have been put aside for everybody to work together. This special session is an example of that."