



## **The Heat Management Grant Assistance (HMAG) Act of 2024**

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### **BACKGROUND:**

Extreme summer heat is increasing around the U.S., and projections indicate that extreme heat events will become more frequent and intense in coming decades. These extreme heat events have already taken a significant toll on our communities. Cities, counties, and Tribal communities are struggling to keep up with the demands of extreme heat — putting lives at risk. Last year, Maricopa County, Arizona recorded a tragic 645 heat-related deaths, a 50% year-over-year increase.

### **OVERVIEW:**

This bill will create the **Heat Management Assistance Grant (HMAG) Program** – a quick release Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grant to state, local, territorial, and tribal (SLTT) governments for management of heat events that may become a major disaster. Funding can be used for supplies, assistance, personnel, or other responses to extreme heat events.

HMAG is modeled after the successful Fire Management Assistance Grant program (FMAG). An FMAG declaration can be requested by a state when the governor determines that a fire under state jurisdiction is burning out of control and threatens to become a major disaster. At that point, a request for assistance can be submitted to FEMA. Once issued, the FMAG declaration authorizes various forms of federal fire suppression assistance such as the provision of equipment, personnel, and grants to SLTT governments for the control, management, and mitigation of any fire on certain public or private forest or grassland that might become a major disaster.

Heat is a different type of natural disaster than fire. It is a slow onset disaster and harder to define. But cities and counties still incur these costs – and with the threats of heat growing each year, SLTTs need resources to specifically respond to extreme heat events.

### **SPECIFICALLY, THIS BILL:**

- Amends the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to provide FEMA assistance for extreme heat events, and directs FEMA to work with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to issue a comprehensive heat event definition.
- Creates a dedicated grant program, the HMAG, for responding to extreme heat events. If an SLTT reaches that threshold of “extreme heat event”, they can request an HMAG and receive timely federal assistance. To apply for the HMAG funding, similar to the process for an FMAG, an SLTT must calculate the impact of that extreme heat event – how prolonged heat would lead to loss of lives; the cost of keeping cooling centers open; other local responses – and submit a request for federal assistance.

This legislation has been endorsed by the National Recreation and Park Association, National League of Cities and the City of Phoenix.