

117TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

**S.** \_\_\_\_\_

To provide exemptions from certain Jones Act restrictions to vessels providing disaster relief to Puerto Rico for the areas affected by Hurricane Fiona.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

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Mr. LEE introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_

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**A BILL**

To provide exemptions from certain Jones Act restrictions to vessels providing disaster relief to Puerto Rico for the areas affected by Hurricane Fiona.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Puerto Rico Recovery  
5 Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. TEMPORARY EXEMPTIONS FROM JONES ACT RE-**  
7 **STRICTIONS FOR VESSELS PROVIDING HUR-**  
8 **RICANE RELIEF TO PUERTO RICO.**

9 (a) TEMPORARY EXEMPTION FOR PUERTO RICAN  
10 HURRICANE RELIEF.—

1           (1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding sections  
2           12112, 12103, and 55102 of title 46, United States  
3           Code, the Secretary of the department in which the  
4           Coast Guard is operating (referred to in this section  
5           as “the Secretary”) shall exempt a vessel from the  
6           requirements of such sections if the Secretary deter-  
7           mines that the owner or operator of the vessel has  
8           reasonably demonstrated that the exemption is need-  
9           ed to provide disaster relief to Puerto Rico for areas  
10          affected by Hurricane Fiona.

11          (2) PROCESS.—

12           (A) REQUEST.—An owner or operator of a  
13           vessel may request an exemption under para-  
14           graph (1), and the Secretary shall approve or  
15           deny the request by not later than 72 hours  
16           after the request is made.

17           (B) PUBLIC DENIAL STATEMENT.—In any  
18           case where the Secretary denies an exemption  
19           request under subparagraph (A), the Secretary  
20           shall promptly provide a public, detailed state-  
21           ment regarding the reasoning and analysis for  
22           the denial.

23           (C) DEEMED APPROVAL.—If the Secretary  
24           does not approve or deny a request under sub-  
25           paragraph (A) by not later than 72 hours after

1           the request is made, the request shall be  
2           deemed to be approved.

3           (b) PERIOD OF EXEMPTION.—An exemption ap-  
4 proved under subsection (a) shall be valid until the earlier  
5 of—

6           (1) the date that is 1 year after the date on  
7           which the exemption was approved; or

8           (2) the date on which the major disaster de-  
9           clared by the President under section 401 of the  
10          Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency  
11          Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121) on September 22,  
12          2022 expires.

13          (c) APPLICABILITY.—This section, and any exemp-  
14          tion issued under this section, shall cease to have effect  
15          on the date described in subsection (b)(2).