

The Public Archives Resiliency Act

Senator Edward J. Markey (D-Mass.), Representative Alma Adams (D-N. Carolina)

Section-by-Section

Section 1: Short Title

Section 2: Findings [*Select findings only*]

This section notes Congress's findings related to public archives and resiliency, including that:

- According to a 2018 study from Climate Risk Management
 - more than 20 percent of archival repositories are likely to be affected by storm surges
 - more than 90 percent of archives are estimated to have a temperature change greater than 1°C, with 7.5 percent of sites likely to change by 10°C by 2070
 - Nearly 70 percent of archives are likely to receive at least 6 inches more rainfall by 2100 over current annual averages.
- Recent events demonstrate the importance of investment in public record-keeping systems and institutions. For instance—
 - during the COVID–19 pandemic, many veterans were unable to secure adequate documentation to obtain veterans' benefits and military burials because of insufficient staffing levels at the National Archives Personnel Records Center; and
 - in 2023, 8 of the Lahaina Restoration Foundation's historic sites burned down or were critically damaged, leading to the loss of tens of thousands of artifacts and records in Hawaii due to the Lahaina fires, although the Foundation was able to digitize certain collections before the fires destroyed these artifacts.
- Funding for the National Archives and Records Administration, an independent agency that provides public access to high-value Federal Government records, has not meaningfully increased in the last 30 years, despite an exponential growth in electronic records.

Section 3: Authorizing Grants to Promote Preservation, Climate Resilience, and Adaption for Libraries, Archives, And Museums

This section authorizes competitive grants through the National Historical Publications and Records Commission and the Institute of Museum and Library Services to eligible entities for the purpose of supporting long-term climate resiliency and providing continuity and access to covered records.

Grant funds may be used to support one or more of the following:

- Staffing necessary to support continuity of records and mitigate the possibility of disruption to accessing covered records
- Facility infrastructure upgrades to
 - Protect facilities that house covered records from extreme temperatures, humidity, storms, winds, hurricanes, tornadoes, heavy snow, blizzards, flooding, erosion, wildfires, and sea level rise; and
 - prevent water damage caused by heavy rain, poor grading, snow melt, ice melt, water pipes, drainpipes, and undersized stormwater controls.
- The relocation of covered records and infrastructure outside of hazardous areas, where necessary.
- The provision of internet and broadband connectivity equipment, as well as other technological equipment and resources necessary to digitize and store multiple distributed copies of covered records that are at risk of damage or loss due to extreme weather or other conditions, and to provide online training and materials related to conservation planning and education.
- Language preservation, including through direct outreach, digital and physical record-keeping, and other activities.
- Developing and implementing a climate adaption plan.
- Developing an emergency preparedness and disaster response plan coordination network.
- Accessing conservation and climate risk training and education materials.

Section 4: Administration and Oversight

This section sets aside funding for program administration and states that an entity receiving a grant will not be required to provide matching funds or a non-Federal cost share.

Section 5: Study

This section directs the Comptroller General to conduct a study of covered records to identify eligible entities and covered records vulnerable to environmental damage and to identify safe harbor institutions that could receive repositories for covered records that may need to be relocated.

Section 6: Authorization of Appropriations

This section authorizes funds to carry out the Act