

1 1. The Federal Emergency Management Agency, also known as FEMA, was an agency of
2 the United States government within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). FEMA's
3 responsibilities included, among other things, providing disaster assistance to individuals in an area
4 declared a major disaster by the President of the United States of America. The President could declare
5 a major disaster for any natural event that the President determined had caused damage of such severity
6 that it was beyond the combined capabilities of the state and local governments to respond.

7 2. On or about November 12, 2018, the President of the United States of America declared a
8 major disaster existed in California due to damage resulting from wildfires that began on November 8,
9 2018. FEMA designates major disasters by name and number. A major disaster declaration number is
10 preceded by the letters "DR." The name of the disaster typically relates to the type and/or location of
11 the disaster. FEMA designated the above identified disaster as: California Wildfires (DR-4407).

12 3. As a result of this presidential declaration, residents of Butte County who were affected
13 by what has become known as the Camp fire became eligible to apply for disaster assistance from
14 FEMA.

15 4. FEMA offered various types of disaster assistance to residents in the areas affected by the
16 California wildfires, including through the Individuals and Households Program. The Individuals and
17 Households Program provided financial assistance and direct services to eligible persons in the form of
18 Housing Assistance and Other Needs Assistance. Housing Assistance and some forms of Other Needs
19 Assistance, were available only to an otherwise qualified applicant whose pre-disaster primary residence
20 incurred disaster-related damage.

21 **II. FRAUD IN CONNECTION WITH A MAJOR DISASTER**


22 5. Defendant herein, on or about November 15, 2018, in the State and Eastern District of
23 California, did knowingly make a materially false, fictitious, and fraudulent statement and
24 representation, in a matter involving a benefit authorized, transported, transmitted, transferred,
25 disbursed, and paid, in connection with a major disaster declared under the section 401 of the Robert T.
26 Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. § 5170), and where the benefit was a
27 record, voucher, payment, money and thing of value of the United States and of a Department or Agency
28 of the United States; and the authorization, transportation, transmission, transfer disbursement, and

1 payment of the benefit was in and affected interstate and foreign commerce; that is: the defendant
2 knowingly made a false, fictitious, and fraudulent claim for FEMA assistance in connection with major
3 disaster DR-4407, wherein defendant claimed that she rented a mobile home located at 7209 Skyway
4 Apt. 18, Paradise, California, and that this was her primary residence at the time of the wildfire (DR-
5 4407). In truth and fact, at the time of DD-4407, this was not the defendant's primary residence, the
6 defendant did not reside at this address, and the residence was occupied by a different person(s). As a
7 result of defendant's claim she received benefits including a cash payment of approximately \$9,674.70,
8 and a FEMA trailer. All in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1040(a)(2).

9 A TRUE BILL.

10 **/s/ Signature on file w/AUSA**

11 _____
12 FOREPERSON

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15 MCGREGOR W. SCOTT
16 United States Attorney
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United States v. Deborah Frances Laughlin
Penalties for Indictment

COUNT 1:

VIOLATION: 18 U.S.C. § 1040(a)(2) - Fraud in Connection with a Major Disaster or
Emergency Benefits

PENALTIES: 30 years in prison;
Fine of up to \$250,000; or both fine and imprisonment
Supervised release of at least 5 years up to life

SPECIAL ASSESSMENT: \$100 (mandatory on each count)

No. _____

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

Eastern District of California

Criminal Division

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

vs.

DEBORAH FRANCES LAUGHLIN,
aka Deborah Frances Isgrigg,
aka Deborah Frances Hunt,
aka Debbie Frances Evans,
aka Deborah Frances Thompson

INDICTMENT

VIOLATION(S): 18 U.S.C. § 1040(a)(2) –
Fraud in Connection with a Major Disaster or Emergency Benefits

A true bill,

/s/ Signature on file w/AUSA

Foreman.

Filed in open court this 12 day

of December, A.D. 20 19

Clerk.

Bail, \$ _____

NO BAIL WARRANT PENDING HEARING