

Press Releases

Committee Leaders Introduce Bipartisan Bill to Dramatically Reform FEMA

Transportation and Infrastructure Committee leaders introduced legislation in the U.S. House that would provide the most robust legislative reform of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and federal disaster assistance programs in decades.

The *Fixing Emergency Management for Americans (FEMA) Act of 2025* (H.R. 4669) was introduced by Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Sam Graves (R-MO); Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Ranking Member Rick Larsen (D-WA); former Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management Subcommittee lead Republican Daniel Webster (R-FL); and Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management Subcommittee Ranking Member Greg Stanton (D-AZ). The *FEMA Act* was introduced following Graves' and Larsen's release of a discussion draft bill on May 8, 2025, and the subsequent feedback the Committee received on the draft from Members of Congress and the emergency management stakeholder community.

The *FEMA Act* streamlines the federal government's disaster response and recovery programs while also making FEMA a cabinet-level agency once again that is directly accountable to the President. The bill rewards effective state and local preparedness, protects taxpayers, cuts red tape, and ensures that relief efforts are fast, fair, and free from political bias.

"The American people need an emergency management system that works quickly and effectively, not one that makes disaster recovery more difficult," said Chairman Graves. "But time and time again, we've heard the same story from state and local officials, emergency managers, and disaster victims: the federal process is too slow, complicated, and disconnected from the realities on the ground. Communities trying to rebuild are forced to navigate a maze of complicated rules, conflicting timelines, and mountains of burdensome paperwork. FEMA is in need of serious reform, and the goal of the *FEMA Act of 2025* is to fix it. This bill does more than any recent reforms to cut through the bureaucracy, streamline programs, provide flexibility, and return FEMA to its core purpose of empowering the states to lead and coordinating the federal response when it's needed."

"Billion-dollar disasters—like the devastating 2021 flooding in Skagit and Whatcom counties – threaten the safety and livelihood of communities in Washington and across America as the severity of disasters increase," Ranking Member Larsen said. "This bipartisan bill will make FEMA stronger and more efficient, giving it the tools it needs to provide relief to disaster-impacted communities like those in my district hit by the 2024 Bomb Cyclone. Thank you to my counterpart, Chairman Sam Graves, for partnering on this bipartisan solution."

"As a Floridian, I know firsthand the damage that hurricanes and natural disasters bring, and how important effective preparation, response and relief is when tragedy strikes," said Rep. Webster. "Florida has set the gold standard for disaster mitigation and emergency response, and this legislation builds on that success at the national level. By streamlining FEMA and cutting red tape, we ensure that federal disaster response is faster, more efficient, and accountable to the American people."

"FEMA's mission is to help Americans in their darkest hour. The agency isn't perfect, and its job is getting harder as disasters grow more frequent and more severe. But the solution is not to tear FEMA down – it's to work across the aisle to build FEMA up," said Ranking Member Stanton. "This bipartisan bill takes common-sense steps to streamline the agency and make sure communities get disaster assistance quickly, efficiently and fairly."

The text of the *FEMA Act of 2025* is available [here](#).

A section-by-section summary of the *FEMA Act* is available [here](#).

Summary of the *FEMA Act of 2025*

The *FEMA Act of 2025* restores FEMA's original status as an independent agency, reporting directly to the President and overseen by its own inspector general.

- This structure mirrors the *Stafford Act*, which authorizes the President to direct federal disaster response efforts through the Disaster Relief Fund.
- Returning FEMA to a Cabinet-level agency will empower the Administrator to lead a coordinated, government-wide response to disasters.
- FEMA will become more agile and focused on helping Americans – not bogged down by having its resources and personnel diverted to support non-*Stafford Act* disasters.

The *FEMA Act of 2025* puts disaster-impacted states in the driver's seat, helps dollars reach communities faster, injects common sense, and cuts red tape that can drag out disaster recovery for decades.

- By replacing the slow and bureaucratic rebuilding process with faster, project-based grants, states will be able to set the pace of recovery, reduce their dependence on costly consultants, and prioritize the highest need projects, without having to take out expensive loans or wait years for reimbursement.
- For the first time, states are incentivized to make their own investments in mitigation, robust state rainy day funds, and private insurance policies.
- This legislation also makes critical reforms to federal permitting and procurement processes to speed up rebuilding projects and eliminate unnecessary delays.
- In addition, the *FEMA Act of 2025* establishes a Recovery Task Force charged with closing out more than 1,000 lingering disaster declarations dating back to Hurricane Katrina and directs FEMA to improve coordination across all federal agencies involved in disaster recovery.

The *FEMA Act of 2025* makes commonsense changes to help disaster aid work better for survivors, while saving taxpayer dollars.

- Disaster survivors will complete a single, streamlined application when applying for assistance, significantly reducing the paperwork burden.
- FEMA must provide clear, understandable notices to disaster survivors, ending the confusion caused by complex and jargon-filled denial letters.
- It directs the FEMA Administrator to apply practical, survivor-focused solutions that both speed assistance to disaster victims and reduce overall costs to taxpayers.
- The *FEMA Act of 2025* removes disincentives that have discouraged donations from charities, religious organizations, and the public, ensuring more non-federal support is available for disaster survivors.
- States are given more flexibility to determine the best emergency housing solution for a particular disaster.

The *FEMA Act of 2025* strengthens efforts to protect communities before a disaster occurs.

- The *FEMA Act 2025* overhauls FEMA's existing mitigation framework to accelerate project timelines, reduce long-term disaster costs, and ensure greater coordination across federal funding streams, so states can more effectively leverage resources.
- States can pre-vet mitigation projects through a peer-review process to speed up funding when disaster strikes and combine funds from federal programs to expedite the completion of critical projects.
- The *FEMA Act of 2025* clarifies building code requirements, ensuring states retain the flexibility to tailor standards to the hazards they face.
- The legislation also supports homeowners as they invest in cost-effective mitigation improvements, reducing long-term disaster costs.

The *FEMA Act of 2025* prevents the politicization of disaster aid and demands greater transparency and accountability from FEMA.

- The *FEMA Act of 2025* strictly prohibits any political discrimination in providing disaster recovery assistance. It directs the Office of Management and Budget to establish a centralized public website that tracks disaster assistance funding across the federal government.
- The bill mandates a full Government Accountability Office review of all FEMA regulations and policies to eliminate outdated, conflicting, and unnecessary rules.
- It also requires an assessment of identity theft and disaster fraud risks, and directs reviews related to insurance coverage, the effectiveness of public alerting systems, and cost savings associated with the reforms in the discussion draft.