

## FEMA ACT OF 2025

A bipartisan draft bill — the *Fixing Emergency Management for Americans (FEMA) Act of 2025* — has been introduced in the U.S. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. The proposal would implement major reforms to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) aimed at streamlining disaster response, accelerating aid delivery, reducing administrative burdens, and providing greater flexibility to state and local governments.

The primary sponsors of the bill are House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Sam Graves (R-MO) and Ranking Member Rick Larsen (D-WA).

Key provisions include restoring FEMA's status as an independent, Cabinet-level agency, converting Public Assistance to a grant-based system with faster disbursement timelines, creating a universal disaster application, expanding FEMA's home repair authority, and promoting stronger, more resilient post-disaster reconstruction.

The National Association of Counties (NACo) and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) strongly support the bill, noting it incorporates many of their recommendations.

### Key Provisions

#### FEMA as an Independent, Cabinet-Level Agency

- Removes FEMA from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and re-establishes it as an independent agency reporting directly to the president.
- Supporters argue this will strengthen focus, reduce bureaucracy, and improve responsiveness.

#### Public Assistance (PA) Program Reforms

- *Grant-Based Model*: Shifts from reimbursement to upfront grant funding.
- *Faster Disbursement*: Requires funds to be delivered within 120 days of a disaster declaration; long-term project estimates reviewed in 90 days with disbursement in 30 days.
- *Sliding Federal Cost-Share*: Federal share ranges from 65–85% based on local mitigation measures.
- *EHP Review Streamlining*: Simplifies environmental and historic preservation review processes.
- *Management Cost Flexibility*: Allows costs to be spread across multiple disasters.

#### Individual Assistance (IA) Program Reforms

- *Universal Disaster Application*: Will simplify survivor access to assistance.
- *Expanded Home Repair Authority*: Will allow FEMA to fund repairs beyond basic habitability.
- *Clarification on Charitable Donations*: Will ensure private aid does not reduce federal benefits.
- *Pre-Approved Mitigation Projects*: States must identify at least one project per county in advance.

- *Build Back Stronger*: Permits rebuilding to more resilient standards rather than restoring pre-disaster conditions.
- *Broadened Building Code Definition*: Allows for greater local flexibility.

## **Mitigation and Resilience Improvements**

- *Pre-Approved Mitigation Projects*: States must identify at least one project per county in advance.
- *Build Back Stronger*: Permits rebuilding to more resilient standards rather than restoring pre-disaster conditions.
- *Broadened Building Code Definition*: Allows for greater local flexibility.

## **Transparency and Accountability**

- Requires Government Accountability Office (GAO) reports on FEMA transparency.
- Could lead to tools such as a public-facing “FEMA Dashboard.”

## **The FEMA 2025 Act in Congress**

The *Fixing Emergency Management for Americans (FEMA) Act of 2025* is expected to move first through the U.S. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, which has jurisdiction over FEMA programs and related emergency management legislation. Hearings on the proposal are anticipated in September 2025, with potential committee markup and advancement to the full House for consideration later in the fall.

Should the bill clear the House, it will likely be referred to the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, which oversees federal disaster response programs. While timelines in Congress are subject to change, supporters aim for passage before the end of the 2025 legislative year to ensure reforms are in place ahead of the next major disaster season.

