

Disaster Recovery Reform Act of 2018 Transforms Field of Emergency Management

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WASHINGTON – Today, President Donald J. Trump signed the [Disaster Recovery Reform Act of 2018](#) (DRRA) into law as part of the Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization Act of 2018.

As the 2017 hurricane season and California wildfires demonstrated, impacts from a disaster can be devastating. With the economic disruption and the cost of disasters on the rise nationwide, FEMA worked closely with Congress over the past year as they considered, and ultimately passed, important reforms to federal disaster programs.

These reforms acknowledge the shared responsibility of disaster response and recovery, aim to reduce the complexity of FEMA and build the nation's capacity for the next catastrophic event.

“This transformational legislation will allow the emergency management community to continue to improve the way we deliver assistance before, during and after disasters,” said FEMA Administrator Brock Long. “We’ll never be able to eliminate all risks, but this enables us to take action now so that individuals and communities will be better positioned to recover more quickly when disasters do occur. We thank Congress, the administration and our state and local partners in their efforts to move this critical reform package forward.”

Highlights from the DRRA include:

- Greater investment in mitigation, before a disaster: Authorizing the National Public Infrastructure Pre-Disaster Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, which will be funded through the Disaster Relief Fund as a six percent set aside from disaster expenses.



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- This program will focus on funding public infrastructure projects that increase community resilience before a disaster occurs.
 - Previously, funding for pre-disaster mitigation grants relied on congressional appropriations which varied from year to year. Now, with a reliable stream of sufficient funding, communities will be able to plan and execute mitigation programs to reduce disaster risk nationwide.
 - According to a 2017 National Institute of Building Sciences report, the nation saves six dollars in future disaster costs for every one dollar invested in mitigation activities.
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- Reducing risk from future disasters after fire: Providing hazard mitigation grant funding in areas that received Fire Management Assistance Grants as a result of wildfire. Adding fourteen new mitigation project types associated with wildfires and windstorms.
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- Increasing state capacity to manage disaster recovery: Allowing for higher rates of reimbursement to state, local and tribal partners for their administrative costs when implementing public assistance (12 percent) and hazard mitigation projects (15 percent). Additionally, the legislation provides flexibility for states and tribes to administer their own post-disaster housing missions, while encouraging the development of disaster housing strategies.
 - States, tribes, territories and local governments bear significant administrative costs implementing disaster recovery programs. Often these costs can be high and substantially burdensome for the impacted entity to meet. Increasing the funding for administrative costs will enable faster, more effective delivery of vital recovery programs to communities.
 - State and tribal officials have the best understanding of the temporary housing needs for survivors in their communities. This provision incentivizes innovation, cost containment and prudent management by providing general eligibility requirements while allowing them the flexibility to design their own programs.
 - Providing greater flexibility to survivors with disabilities: Increasing the amount of assistance available to individuals and households affected by disasters, including allowing accessibility repairs for people with disabilities, without counting those repairs against their maximum disaster assistance grant award.



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- Retaining skilled response and recovery personnel: Authorizing FEMA to appoint certain types of temporary employees who have been with the agency for three continuous years to full time positions in the same manner as federal employees with competitive status. This allows the agency to retain and promote talented, experienced emergency managers.

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FEMA's mission is to help people before, during and after disasters.

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