

From: Transportation Committee Republicans
Sent: 25 Mar 2025 10:38:52 -0400
To: Priebe, Jack (OST)
Subject: Chairman Perry Statement from Hearing on Reforming FEMA

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the Department of Transportation (DOT). Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.



COMMITTEE ON
**TRANSPORTATION
& INFRASTRUCTURE**
SAM GRAVES, CHAIRMAN

PRESS RELEASE

Chairman Perry Statement from Hearing on Reforming FEMA

For Immediate Release: March 25, 2025
Contact: Justin Harclerode (202) 225-9446

Washington, D.C. - *Opening remarks, as prepared, of Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management Subcommittee Chairman Scott Perry (R-PA) from today's hearing, entitled, "Reforming FEMA: Bringing Common Sense Back to Federal Emergency Management":*

I want to thank our witnesses for being here today to discuss reforming FEMA and how we can bring common sense back to federal emergency management.

After witnessing the federal government's response to Hurricane Helene last year and the recent Los Angeles wildfires, I, like most Americans, was shocked by many of the stories I heard coming from these communities. I know Members of this committee have proposed, and Congress has enacted, reform after reform to make FEMA and the federal emergency management system work better. Despite these efforts, it seems that nothing has improved. This is not meant to be a beatdown of FEMA, but we cannot just keep going the way we have been and expect different outcomes. In fact, the bureaucratic labyrinth has only become more complicated, causing unnecessary delays when disaster strikes.

Taxpayers fund FEMA grant programs for states and local governments to invest in mitigation, preparedness, and response, yet many of these programs move too slowly, preventing timely and effective action when it is most direly needed. For 46 years, individual regions should have been reducing risk, the impact of emergencies, and the number of emergencies themselves. Unfortunately, the metrics, including the cost and impact, have all gone in the wrong direction.

What we saw in the case of Hurricane Helene is demonstrative of that fact. FEMA was ill-prepared to support response and recovery in the mountains of North Carolina. In California, we saw a lack of preparedness by state and local officials – from a lack of water for firefighting to disorganization on the ground, despite billions of taxpayer dollars going to California for mitigation, preparedness, and firefighting.

On top of all of that, there are still over 1,000 open FEMA disaster declarations dating back to Hurricane Katrina, and well over 5,000 open projects. This raises serious questions about whether the federal government is the best institution to respond to localized disasters.

Federal disaster assistance was created to support state and local governments when absolutely necessary – when the resources required exceed the ability of local agencies to respond. Unfortunately, the trend has been to utilize FEMA as the first responder to every disaster occurring throughout the nation.

This increase in reliance on the federal government is dangerous and costly. FEMA was not designed to be the first responder in disasters. States and local governments are. They know their communities best – they understand the risks, what their communities need, the terrain, and how to navigate it to quickly respond to emergencies.

It is critical, therefore, that state and local governments make disaster preparedness a priority – that they budget for it, have the right people and training in place, and ensure that they have the capability to respond.

The current system creates a perverse incentive for states. States are mostly off the hook for meaningfully investing in their own emergency response and preparedness plans because they have come to rely on FEMA stepping in every time.

Meanwhile, FEMA is stretched thin and is so weighed down by self-imposed bureaucratic requirements that they can't respond effectively when called upon or even close out projects going back 20 years.

FEMA's ability to function effectively was further undermined as the previous administration pushed its open border, equity, and climate agenda onto the agency, resulting in disaster funding being diverted to projects like planting trees to address urban "heat islands." It is no wonder that President Trump created the FEMA Review Council and issued an executive order on state and local preparedness.

I am hopeful this hearing will provide valuable insight, as T&I is the lead House Committee on FEMA and federal emergency management, because meaningful reform is urgently needed.

Click [here](#) for more information from today's hearing, including video and witness testimony.

WEBSITE | UNSUBSCRIBE | CONTACT



[Click Here](#) to view this email in your browser
[Click Here](#) to be removed from this list