

From: Transportation Committee Republicans
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COMMITTEE ON

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

SAM GRAVES, CHAIRMAN

PRESS RELEASE

Chairman Perry Statement from Hearing Examining FEMA and the Nation's Emergency Management

For Immediate Release: July 23, 2025

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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, "Fixing Emergency Management: Examining Improvements to FEMA's Disaster Response":*

I want to thank our witness, Mr. Richardson, for being here today to discuss fixing emergency management and improving the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA's) disaster response.

Earlier this month, devastating flash floods hit Texas causing a death toll of more than 130 people, including children from a summer camp.

The Coast Guard, FEMA, and other federal agencies assisted Texas in the search, rescue, and response. President Trump issued a major disaster declaration, opening further federal assistance for disaster victims and to assist in the recovery. My condolences and prayers go to the people who have lost loved ones, and to all affected by this disaster. It is unimaginable to those of us who have watched it.

So far in 2025, there have been 20 disasters resulting in major disaster declarations across 10 states. This does not account for emergency declarations and all the open disasters still on the books, going all the way back to Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

I have said this before: I question the increasing role of the federal government in disasters, but when the federal government responds, it helps no one if assistance is slow, bureaucratic, and cumbersome.

States should be the lead in preparing for, mitigating against, and responding to disasters. When the federal government does provide assistance, it should be fast, agile, and targeted in a way that's most effective.

What I believe we can all agree on is this – 20 years from now, in 2045, we do not want to see congressional hearings asking why disasters that happened in 2025 are still open. The longer it takes for communities to rebuild, no matter who's paying, the higher the costs and the more vulnerable those communities are to additional harm from other hazards.

Over the years, Congress has passed reform after reform trying to fix FEMA and get federal disaster response to work effectively. Quite honestly, little seems to work. Congress passes something intended to fix disaster response, but bureaucrats continue to complicate the law with added regulations. This makes the implementation and process more confusing. At times, it seems the process actually gets worse, not better.

The process becomes even more unclear when you add in the numerous federal agencies that are now involved in disasters. The whole point of FEMA was to carry out the President's authority in disasters and manage the entire federal government response.

However, we seem to have gotten away from that, and we have many agencies, often with conflicting requirements and rules involved, slowing the process even more.

Today, I hope we can touch on not just what happened in Texas and other recent disasters, but how we can work together effectively to fix our emergency management system. Our constituents and the American people are depending on it; it is our duty. How do we make it work better for the communities hit by disasters and the taxpayer?

I appreciate the leadership of the Full Committee Chairman, Sam Graves, and Ranking Member Larsen for their work in trying to tackle these issues with their legislation, and we look forward to seeing that very shortly.

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

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