



March 13, 2025

U.S. Representative Dale Strong  
Chair, Subcommittee on Emergency Management and Technology  
House Committee on Homeland Security

Dear Chairman Strong:

On behalf of The American Institute of Architects (AIA), representing over 100,000 design professionals--including over 2,000 represented by the members of the subcommittee--we send this letter to be included into the record and further urge you to strongly support the continuation of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) two main objectives: disaster aid and mitigation funding. These types of funding create high return on investment to the taxpayer and accelerate economic recovery post disaster.

AIA and its members are grateful for the support for FEMA and FEMA funding that was voiced by witnesses and members who attended the most recent subcommittee hearing. As professionals and experts in planning, designing, and rebuilding post disaster, architects strongly support no disruption or changes to FEMA's core mission or funding levels. We believe that disaster management and the federal approach to it as become smarter and more professionalized over the past five decades, not the other way around. We also believe scientists that are predicting the disaster related events the size of which FEMA is called upon to assist with will only grow in numbers in the decades to come. Therefore, we need a strong, healthy, and robustly funded FEMA to assist our neighborhoods, towns, cities and states in preparation for these future catastrophic events. Now is not the time to ran away from our future, but lean into it through mitigation, resilience, preparation and planning.

In 1980, there were three disasters that cost approximately \$45.6 billion. The cost for the 27 disasters last year has been over \$180 billion so far.<sup>1</sup> Further, the total budget surplus of all fifty states is projected to be \$152.9 billion for Fiscal Year 2025<sup>2</sup>; approximately \$30 billion less than the total cost of last year's disasters. If states were required, by Congress, to fund recovery costs, every state would have to relinquish its entire budget surplus this year. By placing the onus on the states to go it alone and to fund major disaster recovery ignores a basic American premise: that we are all one community connected together to be counted on when unfortunate events happen. We are the *United States*, and no situation should that be more evident and leaned into than when a major disaster hits one of our states. Additionally, from a fiscal perspective, states budgets would be overwhelmed if they had to go it alone. This in-turn would make them financially vulnerable to non-disaster-related budget shocks and slow post-disaster economic recovery in affected cities and states. Such a policy could set back the economic health of a state and the country for decades to come.

As pointed out during the hearing, hazard mitigation is a smart investment, not only does it protect communities, but it also creates significant financial and economic savings. According to a study from the National Institute of Building Sciences (NIBS), the savings-to-spending ratio for mitigation funding is as much as 13:1 and is 6:1 specifically for federal funding. That means FEMA's \$15 billion worth of investment in hazard mitigation projects has saved American taxpayers approximately \$90 billion to date.<sup>3</sup>

Sincerely,

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Chief Advocacy Officer  
The American Institute of Architects

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ncei.noaa.gov/access/billions/events.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.nasbo.org/reports-data/fiscal-survey-of-states>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.nibs.org/files/pdfs/ms\\_v4\\_overview.pdf](https://www.nibs.org/files/pdfs/ms_v4_overview.pdf)

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