

In February 2018, President Donald Trump signed the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018. Part of the bill gives states incentive to invest in resiliency by allowing the federal cost share after a disaster to increase from 75 percent to as high as 85 percent, on a sliding scale based on a state's resiliency ratings. States will be rated on several factors, including adoption of the latest building codes and mitigation plans and investment in disaster relief/emergency management programs.

Eight months after the first bill, Trump signed the FAA Reauthorization Act/ Disaster Recovery Reform Act. The DRRRA authorizes the president to set aside 6 percent of the amount that was distributed through the Disaster Relief Fund after every major disaster. These funds would automatically be deposited into FEMA's Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program fund, which was renamed the National Public Infrastructure Pre-Disaster Mitigation fund by the new law.

This massively enhanced fund, which could be funded with up to \$1 billion per year, based on current disaster spending levels, would be used by communities across the country to proactively mitigate against the risks of flooding, wind, wildfires, and other catastrophes. By comparison, the nation's PDM program was funded with \$30 million in the 2015 fiscal year.

Taken together, these two enactments make significant funds available for strengthening states before and after disasters.

Looking Ahead

NAMIC is now working to ensure states use this money in ways that lead to measurable reductions in disaster losses. To do this, NAMIC is coordinating with FEMA to create the guidance for the submission of cost-effective, risk-reducing grant applications.



To lay the groundwork for this effort, NAMIC's regional vice presidents are working with state legislatures to adopt Resiliency Week, which

will ideally take place the first week of September. They will also host a series of regional disaster summits designed to highlight the changing landscape following the enactment of the DRRRA.

Virginia passed its Resiliency Week resolution in February 2019. Reilly says the state will observe the week by planning for natural disasters and developing long-range mitigation strategies to protect people and property from future hazardous events. The state has already begun investing expertise and resources in the mitigation of the impact of sea-level rise.

The Texas Legislature is now making disaster preparedness and mitigation a priority. According to Martin, more than 25 bills are being considered in the current session. They address everything from flood mitigation to improved access to supplemental nutritional assistance for low-income Texans after a disaster.

On the federal side of preparedness and pre-disaster mitigation, NAMIC and the BuildStrong Coalition are currently

working to create a legislative working group that would develop the next generation of policy goals that will build on previous successes. This includes expanding the reach of BuildStrong by incorporating seismic, wildfire, and flood criteria into the conversation surrounding building codes.

NAMIC also plans to explore new legislation to facilitate public-private partnerships and explicitly allow for FEMA pre-disaster mitigation money to fund state-based resilient construction tax incentives.

The Trump administration has made no secret of its plans for a potential infrastructure overhaul in 2019, and while there is speculation that infrastructure could be a rare area of agreement between the administration and congressional Democrats, the outlook for a comprehensive plan remains unclear. However, a must-pass highway reauthorization package to be developed by the House Transportation and Infrastructure and Senate Environmental and Public Works committees could ultimately serve as the vehicle for wholesale infrastructure investment and reform.

With FEMA expected to issue guidance defining a state's resiliency metrics in the first half of 2019 — pursuant to the new federal cost-share incentive law — NAMIC continues to engage with the agency. The goal is to further impress the importance of ensuring that the cost-share incentive guidance is tied to the adoption and enforcement of the latest building codes, leading to a measurable reduction in disaster losses. [IN](#)

Resiliency Week 2019

NAMIC is encouraging states to undertake a review of their current resiliency programs and begin improving those measures. The association's resolution would establish the first week of September as Resiliency Week.



Supporters of Resiliency Week

- American Institute of Architects
- American Property Casualty Insurance Association
- American Society of Civil Engineers
- BuildStrong Coalition
- Congressional Fire Services Institute
- EPDM Roofing Association
- Federal Alliance for Safe Homes
- Independent Insurance Agents & Brokers of America
- Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety
- International Code Council
- Pew Charitable Trusts
- Portland Cement Association
- Professional Insurance Agents
- VA Ready Mixed Concrete Association [IN](#)