



Sep. 23, 2024

Members,

On Wednesday of this past week, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, which has primary jurisdiction over most emergency management related policy issues, convened to mark-up a number of bills of interest to emergency managers. Overall, the results were primarily in our favor with a majority of the bills we endorsed being passed out of committee. A full listing of the bills can be found below, and the next step would be for them to go to the House floor for a vote.

Background

In the lead-up to the mark-up, the Government Affairs Committee worked in close collaboration with T&I Committee staff, congressional offices, advocacy groups, and our friends at NEMA and BCEM to review and advance these bills through the process. Ultimately, the IAEM-USA Board voted to endorse all but two of the bills under consideration.

One of the bills we endorse was the **Disaster Management Costs Modernization Act** ([HR 7671](#)), which has already been passed by the Senate. This bill would codify a proposal from IAEM and NEMA to allow grantees to utilize management costs across all open disasters.

Based on the GAC's recommendation, the IAEM Board voted to withhold support for two bills on the docket...the Ensuring Quality Investments in Preparedness Act ([HR 8616](#)) and the Natural Disaster Recovery Program Act ([HR 1605](#)). A summary of each:

The Ensuring Quality Investments in Preparedness Act was introduced by Rep. Scott Perry (R-PA) and would require the President to establish a disaster deductible for each state to offset a portion of the federal assistance provided in response to a major disaster. It would amend the Stafford Act to require each state to pay three times its

population or the amount of federal financial assistance provided, whichever number is higher, "to ensure that the American Taxpayer is not fully on the hook for disaster relief." This bill resurrects a proposal first floated in 2017 and is an idea that IAEM has opposed every time it comes back around. The bill was approved during the markup, but there is little hope of it making headway in the Senate at this late stage of the 118th Congress.

The Natural Disaster Recovery Act of 2024 was introduced and championed by Rep. David Rouzer (R-NC). Congressman Rouzer represents a coastal district in North Carolina that has been on the receiving end of multiple hurricanes, and he has a long-simmering and completely understandable frustration with the delays and challenges of the CDBG-DR program. His bill would authorize a FEMA-administered block grant program for disaster assistance to states impacted by federally declared disasters. FEMA would calculate unmet needs, serve as a pass-through for grant funds, and reclaim any misspent or fraudulently used funds. The program, however, would still rely on supplemental appropriations, and be managed by FEMA instead of HUD. Furthermore, without involving HUD and the Congressional committee of jurisdiction for CDBG-DR (House Financial Services), there would be no guarantee that this new program was anything but duplicative. In the opinion of the GAC, the motivation behind the Rouzer bill is completely legitimate, and the GAC is committed to working with him to find a path forward, but as written, the bill would create duplicative programs that would only create more confusion during the response and recovery phase of a disaster.

The Outcome

The old adage that there are two things you don't want to watch being made...sausage and legislation...certainly held true during the negotiations on the Rouzer bill (HR 1605). For a variety of reasons, some of which aren't entirely clear, the Majority opted to combine the Rouzer bill with the Expediting Disaster Recovery Act (HR 6084) [Opposed by IAEM] and then tacked on the Disaster Management Costs Modernization Act (HR 7671)[Endorsed by IAEM]. This was a disappointing turn of events that effectively killed the management costs bill because there was no path forward for this package of bills in the Senate. Faced with Senate opposition to the Rouzer bill and the unfortunate coupling of the three bills forced IAEM, NEMA, and BCEM to oppose the package. The package ultimately failed by a vote of 31-31.

While we are disappointed by the failure to advance the management cost bill, the House T&I Committee should be commended for favorably reporting so many good bills yesterday.

Next Steps

There aren't many legislative days left before Congress plans to adjourn before the election, but hopefully House leadership will get the favorably-reported bills to the

House floor for a vote before the end of September so that the Senate can act on them before the end of the year. Looking ahead, IAEM will continue to work with our partners at NEMA and BCEM to find a path forward for the management cost proposal during the next Congress. And, finally, IAEM looks forward to working with Congressman Rouzer and all other interested stakeholders to find consensus on how best to repair or replace the CDBG-DR program.

Review the Bills Endorsed by IAEM that were Favorably Reported Out

- Expediting Disaster Recovery Act ([HR 6084](#))
- Making Aid for Local Disasters Equal Now Act ([HR 6435](#))
- FEMA Loan Interest Payment Relief Act ([HR 2672](#))
- Disaster Contract Improvement Act ([HR 6997](#))
- Weather Alert Response and Notification Act ([HR 2892](#))
- Federal Emergency Mobilization Accountability Workforce Planning Act ([HR 9037](#))
- Promoting Opportunities to Widen Electrical Resilience Act ([HR 9541](#))
- State-Managed Disaster Relief Act ([HR 8728](#))
- Fire Management Assistance Grants for Tribal Governments Act ([HR 9121](#))
- Addressing Addiction After Disasters Act ([HR 5623](#))
- Duplications of Benefits Victims Relief Act ([HR 6083](#))
- Extreme Weather and Heat Response Modernization Act ([HR 9024](#))

Call to Action

Now is the time to reach out to our Representatives to let them know how each of the bills below could benefit your program. Understanding that you can't "lobby" them by asking them to vote in favor of a bill, we highly recommend educating them on the impact that each bill could have through stories from your community.

Think about ways to communicate: *"If bill XXX passes, this is the positive impact my community would experience."*

Resources

[Click HERE](#) for the contact information for your elected officials.

We would also like to hear about conversations or exchanges you have with these elected officials so that we can help gauge the impact of this effort. You can send updates to: GovAffairs@iaem.com

Working on your Initial Certification or Recertification? Follow the instructions in the [Application Guidebook](#) to count this a Legislative Contact Professional Contribution.