



AMERICAN PUBLIC WORKS ASSOCIATION

Your Comprehensive
Public Works Resource

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June 24, 2025

The Honorable Sam Graves
6th District of Missouri
1135 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rick Larsen
2nd District of Washington
2163 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen:

On behalf of the 32,000 members of the American Public Works Association (APWA) we are submitting comments at your request on the discussion draft of the *Fixing Emergency Management for Americans (FEMA) Act of 2025* you introduced earlier this month. APWA advocates for federal emphasis on mitigation through grants and training opportunities to assist in hardening our nation to best prepare for disasters, and this includes continuing funding for the BRIC program. APWA specifically calls for this continuance in our 119th Session of Congress Emergency Management policy priority document, which is have attached for your reference.

As you know, the federal government emphasized the crucial role of public works through the enactment of Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD)-8 in 2003 (which has since been superseded by Presidential Policy Directive-8 in 2011), recognizing public works professionals as first responders. Public works, with varying degrees of oversight, is responsible for many of the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) [16 Critical Infrastructure Sectors](#). This is particularly relevant pertaining to emergency management and disaster mitigation, response, and recovery.

APWA has collaborated with FEMA on a wide range of issues related to emergency management and disaster response including supporting the goals created by the BRIC grant program. These crucial issues include participating with FEMA on short and long-term disaster mitigation, response, and recovery planning sessions, APWA presentations during FEMA sponsored events and FEMA participation during APWA hosted events, the incorporation of APWA feedback and comments as requested for FEMA regulations, and the signing of a FEMA/APWA Memorandum of Understanding in 2022.

We would highlight APWA's policy priorities which emphasize the importance of disaster preparedness and mitigation. **Your legislation calls for renewing BRIC and aligns with APWA priorities such as:**

- ***Supporting flexibility that allows for small and rural agencies, and financially burdened entities, to better address the needs of their respective communities by tailoring mitigation projects and programs to meet their specific needs.***

PRESIDENT
Dominick A. Longobardi

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Scott D. Grayson, CAE



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- ***Calling for communities to enhance their ability to withstand potential damage by emphasizing resiliency when preparing for and responding to disasters.***

Additionally, APWA supports language in the discussion draft that would streamline the process for our nation's communities to obtain disaster relief by removing one layer of bureaucracy and move FEMA to a "stand-alone" agency with the Director reporting directly to the President of the United States.

As first responders, public works professionals are recognized as the "silent arm of public safety" and are often called upon before, during, and following disasters be they natural or otherwise. Utilizing the tools and expertise provided by public works professionals including their background in providing assessments, financial recommendations, and guidance to FEMA as to how to better respond to emergencies in the areas of remediation.

APWA stands ready to work with Congress and the federal government by offering professional resources and our members' expertise to address our nation's infrastructure and emergency management needs. We support the inclusion of language that reflects such targeted measures as mentioned in the previous paragraph within future legislative packages that will be necessary to address our nation's infrastructure needs. The goals included within this draft discussion provide the needed support to better achieve our nation's common goals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Dominick A. Longobardi". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent "D" and "L".

Dominick A. Longobardi
APWA President

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Scott D. Grayson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent "S" and "G".

Scott D. Grayson, CAE
Chief Executive Officer

CC: The Honorable Jeff Van Drew (R-NJ)
CC: The Honorable Dina Titus (D-NV)

PRESIDENT
Dominick A. Longobardi

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Scott D. Grayson, CAE