



April 23, 2026

The Honorable Sam Graves  
Chairman  
U.S. House Committee on  
Transportation and Infrastructure  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rick Larsen  
Ranking Member  
U.S. House Committee on  
Transportation and Infrastructure  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen:

On behalf of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) – representing more than 101,000 architects and design professionals, 20,000+ firms, and 200+ chapters across every state and internationally – we write in strong support of the bipartisan **Fixing Emergency Management for Americans (FEMA) Act of 2025 (H.R. 4669)** that you are sponsoring.

The FEMA Act aligns directly with AIA's advocacy priorities and with architects' ethical obligation to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public. We urge the House of Representatives to advance this critical legislation without delay. The American Institute of Architects stands with communities and willing partners in Congress to reform FEMA to allow our nation to better withstand future extreme weather events, to mitigate economic damage and business interruption.

Reform is desperately needed to enable our members to more effectively support communities in disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. The workforce reductions in FEMA and the politicization of the federal emergency management system have curtailed our ability to enable our members to deliver vulnerability assessments, post-disaster safety evaluations, transitional housing design, and permitting assistance at the scale and speed communities require. AIA has been a consistent advocate for a stronger, more resourceful, and better-resourced FEMA. This legislation takes important steps in the right direction.

Architects bring a critical perspective to disaster preparedness and response. AIA members have long championed above-minimum standards for hazard-resistant building codes and zoning requirements and volunteer alongside local jurisdictions to determine whether structures are safe to occupy before, during and after disasters.

AIA has trained thousands of architects through its Safety Assessment Program (SAP) and helped write the language for FEMA's National Incident Management System (NIMS) Resource Typing Library, ensuring that trained architect volunteers can be formally requested as strike team leaders, technical supervisors, and evaluators for complex architectural systems through the Emergency Management Assistance Compacts (EMAC).

AIA strongly supports the reforms outlined in H.R. 4669, particularly:

- **Establishing FEMA as an independent, cabinet-level agency (Sec. II, Sec. 12)** reporting directly to the President, with a Senate-confirmed Administrator and

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- vettted/experienced professional leadership across headquarters and regional hubs – essential for year-round risk reduction, response, and recovery;
- **Streamlining transparency and depoliticizing disaster declarations (Sec. 403, Sec. 416)** and appeals to ensure that assistance reaches communities based on demonstrated need, with transparent, consistently applied standards;
  - **Protecting and strengthening FEMA's mitigation programs and Public Assistance (Sec. 205, Sec. 207)** – with consistent support for above-code construction standards, pre-disaster resilience investments, and nature-based solutions that reduce long-term risk and cost to taxpayers;
    - **Supporting the use of latest applicable hazard-resistant building codes (Sec. 101)**
    - **Ensure the latest hazard-resistant codes are applied to each building typology and size (i.e. Sec. 104)**
    - **Support for Sec. 303** which updates applicable building codes.
  - **Ensure transparency in how funds are allocated and assess Interagency collaboration, communications and Mitigative measure success (Sec. 109, Sec. 302, Sec. 308, Sec. 417)** so that every eligible community – regardless of political geography – receives the assistance it is entitled to under law.

As disasters grow in frequency and complexity, architects stand ready to help shape FEMA reform. We urge swift, bipartisan action on H.R. 4669 in the 119th Congress. We are committed to working with Congress to design renewed federal programs that deliver the level of assistance our communities deserve.

Sincerely,



Illya Azaroff, FAIA  
2026 National President  
The American Institute of Architects

CC:

The Honorable Scott Perry, Chairman, Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management;  
The Honorable Greg Stanton, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management;  
The Honorable Andrew Garbarino, Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security;  
The Honorable Bennie G. Thompson, Ranking Member, Committee on Homeland Security;  
The Honorable Dale Strong, Chairman, Subcommittee on Emergency Management and Technology; and  
The Honorable Timothy Kennedy, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Emergency Management and Technology.