



INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE CHIEFS

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December 5, 2017

The Honorable Lou Barletta
Chairman
Economic Development, Public Buildings and
Emergency Management Subcommittee
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Henry C. “Hank” Johnson, Jr.
Ranking Member
Economic Development, Public Buildings and
Emergency Management Subcommittee
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Barletta and Ranking Member Johnson:

On behalf of the approximately 12,000 fire and emergency service leaders of the International Association of Fire Chiefs, I would like to endorse the Disaster Recovery Reform Act (H.R. 4460). This legislation will play an important role in helping the nation to reduce the cost of disasters by promoting common-sense mitigation measures. I look forward to working with you to pass this legislation this year.

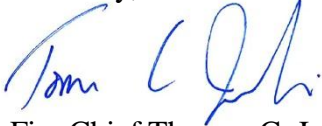
As Chief John Sinclair (IAFC President, 2016-2017) testified at your April 27 hearing, the IAFC is concerned by the steady rise in the number of federal disaster declarations and cost of these disasters. Between 1960 and 1969, the average number of disaster declarations was approximately 19 per year. Between 2010 and 2014, this number skyrocketed to 67 per year, with a record 99 major disaster declarations in 2011. Meanwhile, the costs of disasters is increasing. For example, the average annual cost of federal wildland fire-suppression operations was \$1.25 billion between 2009 and 2012. For the following four years, the average annual cost increased by 32% to \$1.84 billion.

The IAFC supports the Disaster Recovery Reform Act, because it provides incentives for states and communities to take action to prevent and mitigate future disasters. For example, the bill would:

- Allow FEMA’s pre-disaster mitigation funds to be used to establish and carry out code enforcement activities.
- Allow FEMA’s disaster recovery funds to be used to rebuild structures to the latest editions of codes and standards.
- Allow FEMA to cover up to 85% of the cost-share if a state encourages the adoption and enforcement of building codes and standards, and takes other mitigation measures.
- Allows FEMA’s disaster recovery funds to surge code inspectors into a disaster-affected area for 180 days after a disaster to aid with rebuilding and recovery work.
- Adopts language from the Wildfire Prevention Act (H.R. 1183), which would allow states that receive Fire Management Assistance Grants to receive hazard mitigation assistance to prevent flooding and landslides after wildland fires.

As the nation struggles to recover from the damage caused by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria, and major wildland fires in California, we ask that Congress move quickly to pass this legislation this year. I look forward to working with you to ensure swift consideration of this bill on the House Floor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Tom C. Jenkins V". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tom" being the most prominent.

Fire Chief Thomas C. Jenkins V
President and Chairman of the Board

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