

August 12, 2025

The Honorable Sam Graves, Chair
The Honorable Rick Larsen, Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Graves and Ranking Member Larsen

I am writing on behalf of the more than 160,000 members of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE)¹ to thank you for leadership in introducing H.R. 4669, The Fixing Emergency Management for Americans (FEMA) Act of 2025. ASCE would like to endorse the legislation and pledges to work with you to help secure passage.

Communities across the nation face growing risks from natural and human-caused disasters. The federal government, through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), is a vital partner in disaster response, mitigation, and recovery, and ASCE supports your efforts to revitalize and improve FEMA whose role and function has evolved over the years. ASCE supports your efforts to make necessary changes, while preserving the important functions the agency serves.

Recent disaster events have highlighted the nation's vulnerabilities and illustrate the need for all levels of government to share in the responsibility of preparing for and mitigating against the risks they pose. ASCE supports an emergency planning framework that allows for the coordination of local, state, and federal agencies.

¹ Founded in 1852, ASCE is the country's oldest civil engineering organization. Representing civil engineers from private practice, government, industry, and academia, it is ASCE's objective to advance the science and profession of engineering to enhance the welfare of humanity. ASCE is a leader in hazard mitigation efforts aimed at protecting public health, safety, and welfare. ASCE develops and maintains standards that provide technical guidelines for promoting safety, reliability, productivity, and efficiency in civil engineering. Many of our standards are referenced by model building codes and adopted by state and local jurisdictions.

Since 1979, FEMA has provided coherent, coordinated, and effective disaster relief and over time it has become the main arm of national emergency preparedness. FEMA provides disaster assistance, supports recovery efforts, and helps communities become more resilient to future events. While state and local agencies are the primary responders, FEMA offers crucial funding and resources when disaster-related damage exceeds local capacity.

ASCE continues to stress the importance of investing in the resilience of the nation's infrastructure to save money and lives in the long term, and we are pleased to see a continued focus on resilience in the introduced legislation. As the profession most responsible for the built environment, ASCE's members understand that resilience is fundamental to protecting public health, safety, the environment as well as the economy. ASCE's *2025 Report Card for America's Infrastructure* graded the condition of 18 categories of the nation's infrastructure and awarded an overall grade of "C", the highest grade in the 27 years of the Report Card's existence. Among the key recommendations to continue this improvement is an emphasis on resilience, where more work is needed to protect communities against the impacts of extreme weather events. Better outcomes can be realized in disaster recovery and response through project planning and development that prioritizes resilience. This practice enables policymakers to ensure public dollars are used efficiently over a project's lifespan.

ASCE is pleased to see an emphasis on cutting red tape and speeding relief funding, while preserving the unique and critical role the federal government must play during disaster response. The major disaster response system is a complex, multi-layered approach involving federal, state, and local agencies, as well as non-governmental organizations and the private sector. The resources that FEMA brings to major disasters cannot be replicated at the state level, in the same way local knowledge and resources must be supported for a competent response.

Once again, thank you for your leadership in proposing the improvements needed while recognizing the critical role FEMA plays in the nation's ability to prepare for and recover from the impacts of disasters. If we can be of further service, please do not hesitate to contact Martin Hight, ASCE Senior Manager for Government Relations at mhight@asce.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Caroline Sevier". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and a long, sweeping underline.

Caroline Sevier
Managing Director, Government Relations and Infrastructure Initiatives