

FEMA Funding for Floodplain Management, and Dam & Levee Safety

Historically, floods are the most frequent, destructive, and costly natural hazard facing the State of Texas, constituting 90 percent of total damage from all disasters. From 1975 to 1998, Texas recorded \$10.2 billion in property damage from floods alone. Future flood losses are expected to increase with a projected increase in the frequency and severity of storms and a growing population at risk. Texas' population is projected to grow by almost sixty percent by the year 2030. This growth will affect every facet of the lives of our citizens and will expose more people and property to flood hazards. Today, the State of Texas faces the challenges of high flood losses, an increasing risk of flooding events, and rapid population growth putting more people and property in harm's way. It also faces the challenges of outdated Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) and high insurance premiums.

Flooding in Texas, and most recently Hurricanes Rita and Claudette, has again emphasized the need for a coordinated watershed approach to address floodplain management. Texas has both opportunity and challenge with the Administration and Congress to take a larger role in preparing for and recovering from natural disasters. Our communities must equip themselves with the tools to prepare for, mitigate against, respond, and recover from floods. Local and regional governments rely on the several federal agencies to assist them with flood control issues such as FEMA, USACE, and NRCS.

The unfortunate recent disasters have renewed public interest and concern about the reliability of the nations' aging flood control infrastructure, i.e., levees and dams. In 2005, the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) reported on the state of dams in this country and gave the U.S. a grade of 'D'. Although dam failures have been rare, dam safety and security is a major concern in Texas communities.

FEMA programs assist communities with planning for the real threat of flooding and other natural disasters to communities. The programs at FEMA provide Texas communities the resources and tools to address long-term flooding problems through pre- and post disaster mitigation programs. The pre-disaster mitigation programs are ongoing efforts to help both large and small communities better understand how to lessen the impact disasters have on people and property. FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program and Flood Mitigation Assistance are two programs serving as major funding sources (75% federal) to acquire repetitive loss structures and relocate citizens out of harms' way. FEMA's Map Modernization Program helps provide flood hazard information and enhance communities' ability to manage risks and more readily access their flood risk and take action, such as purchasing flood insurance through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

United States Department of Agriculture–Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS) is actively engaged in many watershed protection and flood prevention activities in Texas. Three NRCS programs – the Watershed Surveys and Planning, Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Operations, and the Watershed Rehabilitation Program – provide assistance to local project sponsors in Texas and are critical to protecting communities across Texas.

****REQUEST****

- [Support](#) HR 389—Dam Rehabilitation and Repair Act of 2007—to amend the National Dam Safety Act and authorize a new grant program with FEMA for states to rehabilitation publicly-owned dams in need of repair.
- [Support](#) federal funding of \$150M for Pre-disaster Mitigation Grants in FEMA's budget and \$200M for FEMA's Map Modernization Program.
- [Support](#) funding to USDA Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program for rehabilitating aging flood control infrastructure.

Texas applauds Congress for passage of HR 5441 The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act was amended by change the formula for the post-disaster Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. It restored the amount provided to the State to 15 percent of FEMA obligations for Individual and Public Assistance, for disasters under two billion with a sliding scale for more costly disasters, funding significantly more mitigation in Texas.