



May 31, 2022

The Honorable Gary Peters
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs
340 Dirksen Senate Office Building

The Honorable Rob Portman
U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs
340 Dirksen Senate Office Building

Dear Chairman Peters and Ranking Member Portman:

On April 5, 2022, the U.S. House of Representatives overwhelmingly voted to pass H.R. 5689, the Resilient Assistance for Mitigation for Environmentally Resilient Infrastructure and Construction by Americans (AMERICA) Act, by a vote of 383-41. The BuildStrong Coalition writes to express our strong support for this bipartisan piece of legislation and urge you to schedule consideration of the bill for markup as soon as possible.

Following the landmark Disaster Recovery Reform Act of 2018 (DRRA) and building on the resilience initiatives contained in the bipartisan infrastructure package, the Resilient AMERICA Act would resolve many of the capacity, enforcement, and eligibility issues that have been challenges with implementation of DRRA since its passage. The bill addresses climate impacts by incentivizing and providing resources to facilitate smart, climate-conscious behaviors and mitigation and seeks to remove the moral hazards and policy impediments inhibiting decisionmakers from creating resilient systems and communities. Ultimately, the legislation provides additional tools for families, businesses, and communities to reduce climate risks ahead of the next crisis. As our nation's disaster profile becomes increasingly volatile and the instances of severe climate events grow, it is critical that the Committee act on this issue.

Consideration of the Resilient AMERICA Act would help address issues beyond those with climate impacts. Important mitigation measures like those included in the Resilient AMERICA Act save lives, property, and taxpayer money, and are crucial for reducing environmental disaster impacts. Multiple studies have demonstrated that for every \$1 spent on preventative pre-disaster mitigation and resilient construction, there is a return of as much as \$11 in savings.¹ Such policies are good for the environment and the economy.

This comprehensive bill contains a host of provisions designed to create a significant number of new resources for communities to better protect themselves ahead of natural catastrophes. This includes policies that would increase funding for the National Public Infrastructure Pre-Disaster Mitigation fund (commonly known as Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities, or BRIC, Program) created by the Disaster Recovery Reform Act. The program provides grants to local governments for risk-reducing mitigation projects that make homes and infrastructure more resilient in advance of severe climate events and harden communities by creating new resources and incentives for states and localities to adopt and enforce modern construction standards and building codes. Importantly, the bill will also establish a new pilot program under the Federal Emergency Management Agency to provide resources to communities and homeowners for the purpose of retrofitting existing homes and buildings.

¹ Based on the research and findings of the National Institute of Building Sciences (NIBS).

The BuildStrong Coalition has been proud to serve as a longtime partner to Congress's work to investigate causes of, and devise the solutions to, the rising costs and impacts of disasters in the United States. The Resilient AMERICA Act is the next step in advancing this critical mission. Our organization represents the broad, bipartisan, public-private, and nonprofit stakeholder support for the bill. Founded in 2011 to respond to an increasing number of severe disasters, BuildStrong is made up of a diverse group of members representing firefighters, emergency responders, emergency managers, insurers, engineers, architects, contractors, and manufacturers, as well as consumer organizations, code specialists, and many others committed to building a more disaster resilient nation.

Therefore, the BuildStrong Coalition and its allied partners again ask that the Resilient AMERICA Act be brought to Committee for consideration in an expeditious manner. We look forward to working with you and are prepared to offer our institutional expertise throughout the process.

Sincerely,

Natalie F. Enclade, Ph.D.
Executive Director
BuildStrong Coalition

Cc: American Concrete Pavement Association
American Concrete Pipe Association
The American Institute of Architects
American Property Casualty Insurance Association
American Society of Civil Engineers
U.S. Chamber of Commerce
Concrete Reinforcing Steel Institute
Congressional Fire Services Institute
Council of Insurance Agents and Brokers
Ductile Iron Pipe Research Association
Federal Alliance for Safe Homes
Independent Insurance Agents and Brokers of America
Institute for Sustainable Development
Insurance Information Institute
The Insurance Institute for Business and Home Safety
International Association of Fire Chiefs
International Code Council
Liberty Mutual Insurance
Marsh McLennan
McWane, Inc.
National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies
National Association of State Fire Marshals
National CERT Association
National Concrete Masonry Association
National Council of Structural Engineers Association
National Fire Protection Association
National Institute of Building Sciences
National League of Cities
National Precast Concrete Association
National Ready Mixed Concrete Association
National Recreation and Park Association

National Rural Electric Cooperative Association
Natural Hazard Mitigation Association
Portland Cement Association
PreCast/Prestressed Concrete Institute
Reinsurance Association of America
State Farm Insurance Companies
Travelers