

Coalition Letter to Hill Leadership Requesting Disaster Supplemental Legislation

Dear Speaker Johnson, Majority Leader Schumer, Leader Jeffries, and Leader McConnell:

The undersigned coalition of state and local chambers of commerce urge Congress to expeditiously pass an emergency supplemental appropriations bill during the upcoming Congressional work period to replenish funding for disaster relief programs that have been or are at threat of being exhausted as result of recent natural disasters, including Hurricanes Helene and Milton. Additional funding is necessary to both help already devastated communities and ensure that there are adequate resources to respond to future droughts, hurricanes, tornados, wildfires, and other severe weather.

We also urge you to take the opportunity to complete work on bipartisan proposals to expand predisaster mitigation and resilience projects. These efforts not only help communities prepare for natural disasters, they reduce after disaster costs, including for federal taxpayers.

Emergency Supplemental Funding

Specifically, we urge the Congress to approve immediate additional funding for:

- The Small Business Administration's Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL), which are a critical lifeline for small businesses, non-profits, and homeowners as they seek to rebuild after a natural disaster.
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) disaster recovery and assistance programs, which help individuals, families, and local governments in the immediate aftermath of a natural disaster.
- The Department of Transportation's emergency relief program, which assists with repairing and replacing critical national assets and lifeline infrastructure impacted by unforeseen disasters. These roads, bridges, and other critical infrastructure projects are vital to local economies.

Bipartisan Predisaster Policy Solutions

The following predisaster mitigation policies and others, included in bipartisan legislation already advancing through regular order offer a solid downpayment that will help bolster both current and future federal resilience capabilities in a smart and efficient manner:

- H.R. 6093, the Weather Act, H.R. 7070, the Wildfire Response Improvement Act, H.R. 7671, the Disaster Management Cost Modernization Act, and H.R. 8790, the Fix our Forests Act, and for additional funding and predisaster authorities for comprehensive programs, including CDBG-DR and small business loans.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, together with the Chamber Foundation and Allstate recently released the Preparedness Payoff, a report which states that for every \$1 invested in predisaster mitigation and resilience projects and measures, there are \$13 in overall savings. This means that planning ahead and adapting infrastructure to anticipated disaster risks (e.g., rerouting, hardening infrastructure, and nature-based solutions) can decrease losses due to disasters and reduce the impact on the economy, allowing communities to recover more quickly.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to working with Congress to help communities recover from recent disaster and ensure that the policies and support are in place to prepare for future disasters.

Sincerely,

U.S. Chamber of Commerce