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## House passes PREPARE Act and Disaster Recovery Reform Act to improve disaster resilience

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The House passed a five-year reauthorization of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) on April 27, which included a section requiring changes to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to increase the agency's emphasis on pre-disaster planning and mitigation.

The Disaster Recovery Reform Act (DRRA), originally introduced by Representative Lou Barletta (R-PA-11) (H.R.4660) and now included as Title VI of the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018 (H.R.4), shifts more investment into pre-disaster mitigation and ensures that post-disaster assistance enables communities to build back to the latest model building codes. The DRRA also amends provisions of the Stafford Act (42 U.S.C. 68), which constitutes the federal statutory authority for most disaster response activities, particularly pertaining to FEMA programs.

The same day, the House also passed the Preparedness and Risk Management for Extreme Weather Patterns Assuring Resilience and Effectiveness Act of 2018, or the PREPARE Act (H.R.4177), as one of several amendments made to H.R.4. In response to a Government Accountability Office (GAO) report stating concern over the federal government's financial exposure to climate change, the PREPARE Act was introduced by Representative Matt Cartwright (D-PA-17) along with 24 bipartisan cosponsors to enhance the nation's resilience to extreme weather through better planning and preparation, and dissemination of best practices. The PREPARE Act coordinates government-wide goals and priorities for extreme weather preparedness and improves regional, state, and local coordination to assess vulnerabilities and cost-effective resilience strategies – a move that is consistent with FEMA's new strategic plan and its draft National Mitigation Investment Strategy.

The Senate bill for reauthorization of the FAA (S.1405) does not include disaster relief provisions, and the chamber has not introduced companion bills to the House DRRA and PREPARE Act. The DRRA was almost included in the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 that passed into law earlier this year with a supplemental disaster aid package, but the majority of those DRRA provisions were scrapped by Senate lawmakers before its final passage, though a few elements remained incorporated.

*Sources: Federal Emergency Management Association, U.S. Government Accountability Office, U.S. Government Publishing Office*

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