



**Free Market and Taxpayer Groups to Congress:**

**Support the Preparedness and Risk Management for Extreme Weather Patterns Assuring Resilience and Effectiveness (PREPARE) Act of 2015**

July 22, 2015

Dear Representative,

On behalf of the undersigned free-market and taxpayer organizations, we urge you to join Reps. Matt Cartwright, D-Pa., and Leonard Lance, R-N.J., in supporting the Preparedness and Risk Management for Extreme Weather Patterns Assuring Resilience and Effectiveness (PREPARE) Act of 2015. By streamlining the federal government's processes and coordinating agency response to extreme weather events, the act goes a long way toward ensuring taxpayer dollars aren't wasted in the wake of a natural disaster.

That the federal government will spend emergency funds on disasters in the future is virtually guaranteed. When disaster strikes, no Congress will be able to resist the call for assistance. Since further spending is inevitable, it is imperative to take the necessary steps to ensure an efficient, streamlined response.

Since 2000, only two years have seen less than 100 disaster declarations. In 2011, there were 242 such declarations, as well as 1,096 deaths linked to natural catastrophes and \$23.9 billion in damage. From 1988-2013, the National Weather Service estimates that all hazard damages totaled \$461.8 billion, for an annual average of \$26.2 billion.

Yet despite these dire statistics, the federal government has yet to adopt many of the recommendations from the 2013 Government Accountability Office High Risk Report, such as the need to centralize strategy for coordinated response, monitor and verify agency effectiveness at responding to disaster, and the need to pass data and recommendations along to state and local governments. We can't afford to delay any longer. With an average of 680 hazardous weather-related deaths per year, it's time for the federal government to act and improve preparedness and mitigation, both in federal agencies and across states and localities.

Toward this end, the PREPARE Act:

- Creates an interagency council to set goals and priorities for resilience, preparedness, and risk management at the federal level;
- Assists state, local and tribal governments in managing their preparedness and risk by accessing the interagency council for recommendations and resources;
- Requires the interagency council to craft recommendations for how to respond to the GAO High Risk report; and
- Compels each agency to submit a disaster response plan and merge the plans to create a coordinated federal-level response to severe weather events, ensuring each agency can conduct business effectively during a disaster.

Thirty-three disasters have already been declared for 2015, and more are sure to come. Please join your fellow congressmen and help reduce the fiscal and human costs of these disasters by supporting the PREPARE Act.

Sincerely,

R Street Institute  
Coalition to Reduce Spending  
Niskanen Center  
Taxpayers for Common Sense  
Taxpayers Protection Alliance