

COMPREHENSIVE REFORM OF THE STAFFORD ACT

1. **WHEREAS**, The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act is the federal law that supports preparation for and response to disasters, giving the President power to issue disaster declarations that authorize help for states and local communities overwhelmed by events that have disrupted their normal functioning; and
2. **WHEREAS**, in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and after other natural and man-made events which have occurred since 2005, it has become increasingly clear that the Act is inadequate to address many of the most pressing needs of governments and communities affected by such events; and
3. **WHEREAS**, though the Stafford Act was written to give discretion to federal administrations for tailoring the response to the need, that flexibility is not adequate to handle the widespread destruction of a catastrophe, and it is not always used to make the most effective decisions after emergency events in general; and
4. **WHEREAS**, response is frequently stymied by a limiting law, bureaucratic inefficiencies and conflicting or unclear policies and regulations; and
5. **WHEREAS**, to bring about critically needed comprehensive reform, the U.S. Conference of Mayors Stafford Act Reform Task Force has devoted considerable time and effort to the development of a paper which identifies specific problems with current Stafford Act law, regulation, and policy which impede effective preparedness, response, mitigation and recovery efforts, and has proposed changes which will enhance local emergency management and recovery capability,
6. **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the U.S. Conference of Mayors adopts as its official policy the detailed recommendations of the Stafford Act Reform Task Force included in the paper which call for changes in Stafford Act law and policy that will:
 - Provide for catastrophic disaster designation to speed up funding availability and recovery;
 - Require Catastrophic Disaster Housing Plans to meet community needs;
 - Adequately fund and streamline the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program;
 - Increase funding for and improve administration of programs to meet needs of individuals and communities experiencing disasters and host communities providing assistance;
 - Finalize the National Disaster Housing Plan and Improve Disaster Housing;
 - Reform insurance regulations to facilitate disaster recovery;
 - Reform disaster assistance programs to facilitate recovery;
 - Adequately fund and support preparedness and response activities;
 - Increase FEMA's administrative and response capabilities;
 - Consolidate all Stafford Act statutory and regulatory provisions; and
7. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that as soon as possible the U.S. Conference of Mayors, through its Stafford Act Reform Task Force, present these recommendations to the Administration and Congress and work with them to quickly make administrative changes and develop and enact legislation embodying these recommendations.