

Davis' FEMA Reform Bill Signed Into Law



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PRESS RELEASE / U.S. Rep. Rodney Davis (R-Ill.) released the following statement after his bill to reform the FEMA funding formula was signed into law today as part of the FAA reauthorization package.

"This change is long overdue and it is one I have fought tirelessly for since my first term in Congress," Davis said. "My legislation will help level the playing field and ensure rural areas, like my district, are treated fairly when a disaster happens and help is needed. I am very happy to see this finally signed into law and that my constituents, who pay into the Disaster Relief Fund, will receive more fairness when seeking federal assistance following a major disaster."

Davis' bill, the Disaster Declaration Improvement Act, requires FEMA to place greater consideration on the severe localized impact of damage following a disaster. Under current law, FEMA takes into account several factors when determining the need for assistance, but there is no standard to determine which factor is more important than another. This provision will help level the playing field for rural communities in downstate Illinois when disasters happen.

FEMA's Formula

Currently, FEMA uses a per-capita formula to determine the need for public assistance. They multiply the state's population with \$1.39 then use this number as a threshold for determining the state's need for public assistance. Illinois compared to surrounding states:

Illinois \$18 million
Indiana \$9.1 million
Missouri \$8.4 million
Wisconsin \$8 million
Kentucky \$6.1 million
Iowa \$4.3 million

FEMA can also take into account damage done in a specific county but whether they take this into account and how much this will impact their decision is highly subjective. The formula used to determine this is \$3.50 per capita in infrastructure damage in a county.

Latest Example

Illinois sustained \$15 million in flood damage in 2015/2016. Governor Rauner requested public assistance for 16 counties. In one county, damages were assessed at \$4 million, which was \$486.00 per capita for that county. Illinois was still denied public assistance.

Davis has been working to bring fairness within in the disaster declaration process since his first term.