

# Background Document

The American Institute of Architects

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## Resilient AMERICA Act

### BACKGROUND

This document provides additional background information for the Resilient AMERICA (Assistance for Mitigation for Environmentally Resilient Infrastructure and Construction by Americans) Act. Please note that this document is for AIA member use only and is not meant to be shared with Members of Congress (MOCs) or Congressional staff.

The Resilient AMERICA Act is a bipartisan bill that would significantly improve the federal government's ability to prepare communities to be more resilient to natural disaster threats. The legislation:

- Increases funding for FEMA's Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) from the current 6% to 15%.
- Provides private non-profit organizations new BRIC program eligibility, which are oftentimes the very organizations providing essential post-disaster community services.
- Sets aside no less than 10% of all BRIC awards to fund the adoption and enforcement of the latest consensus-based building codes and standards, including efforts to train building code enforcement officials.
- Expands eligibility for FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Assistance programs to now include resilience improvements to wildfires, ice storms, and tsunamis.
- Establishes a new Residential Retrofit and Resilience Pilot Program, which would set aside no less than 10% of all BRIC awards to fund residential resilience retrofit grants to strengthen home resilience. Eligible projects must comply with the most recent consensus-based building codes and standards.

### For more information

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### KEY MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

Last Congress, the bill was introduced with bipartisan support from the following (current) House members: Reps. Graves (R-MO-06), Titus (D-NV-01), Webster (R-FL-11), Norton (D-DC-At Large), and Houlahan (D-PA-06).

The key Congressional committees with jurisdiction over the Resilient AMERICA Act are:

- House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee (T&I) and
- Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee (HSGAC)

### POTENTIAL QUESTIONS:

Why should Congress increase the percentage of funding going to the BRIC program?



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- During the last Congressional session, the House and Senate Committees of jurisdiction disagreed on whether this BRIC increase was necessary.
- AIA's position is that the increase of BRIC funding is critical to meaningful outcomes at the community level.
- The federal government should prioritize more funding to better prepare communities to be resilient before disaster strikes.

Why should the federal government support state and local adoption or enforcement of hazard-resistant building codes?

- AIA supports an eligible use of funds to reach one of the latest two editions of consensus-based building codes, as that will be more feasible to build to scale across the country, while still improving building resilience from previous levels.

## CONCLUSION

The main goal of these Lobby Day meetings is to urge Members of Congress to support the Resilient AMERICA Act. The takeaway message:

- The federal government must do more to prepare communities to be more resilient to natural disaster threats.
- Support the Resilient AMERICA Act, which would make critical improvements to FEMA's ability to support community pre-disaster mitigation efforts.
- AIA is committed to being a resource to Members of Congress on this legislation moving forward.

Thank you for your willingness to participate in AIA's 2023 Lobby Day! Good luck!

