

HM0191

2005

## House Memorial

1  
2 A memorial to the Congress of the United States, urging  
3 the review and reorganization of Federal Emergency  
4 Management Agency policies and administrative procedures  
5 for the purpose of avoiding delays in cleanup and  
6 reimbursement in the aftermath of declared disasters.

7  
8 WHEREAS, in the summer of 2004, the State of Florida  
9 endured an unprecedented incidence of four consecutive  
10 hurricanes striking the state in a period of two months, causing  
11 enormous destruction to property and infrastructure and leaving  
12 70 people dead throughout the state, and

13 WHEREAS, though much reconstruction and rebuilding has been  
14 accomplished in the aftermath of Hurricanes Frances, Charley,  
15 Jeanne, and Ivan, many Florida communities are continuing to  
16 struggle with rebuilding efforts, and

17 WHEREAS, during the recovery process, the Governor's Office  
18 has worked diligently in securing funds for our state from the  
19 Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and

20 WHEREAS, though the Federal Emergency Management Agency has  
21 provided much-needed assistance, many South Florida communities  
22 are currently being required to submit to new, needlessly  
23 restrictive bureaucratic policies in order to obtain relief from  
24 the agency, and

25 WHEREAS, as a result of these new bureaucratic policies,  
26 South Florida communities are now confronted with unnecessary  
27 regulatory hurdles in obtaining FEMA funds that have delayed  
28 cleanup efforts and badly needed federal reimbursements and that  
29 continue to negatively impact the lives of Florida citizens, and

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30 WHEREAS, under the new FEMA policies and administrative  
 31 processes, instead of appropriate local governments acting as a  
 32 conduit for management and disbursement of FEMA moneys and  
 33 debris removal, each private community or homeowners'  
 34 association is required to apply for such assistance on its own,  
 35 in effect making it impossible for a city to obtain a blanket  
 36 reimbursement to cover its cleanup costs for the city's entire  
 37 jurisdiction, and

38 WHEREAS, under these new policies, municipalities such as  
 39 the City of Coconut Creek have been advised that they will not  
 40 be reimbursed by FEMA for cleanup services provided to private  
 41 communities within the municipality, whether gated or otherwise,  
 42 and have been instructed to advise such private communities to  
 43 manage their debris removal and apply on an individual basis to  
 44 FEMA for reimbursement, a process that is both administratively  
 45 and operationally unsound, and

46 WHEREAS, certain legislative districts in the state  
 47 encompass nearly 100 condominium and homeowners' associations,  
 48 and many South Florida communities, such as Weston, are composed  
 49 almost entirely of private communities, and

50 WHEREAS, these private communities are not equipped or  
 51 prepared to undertake the FEMA application process and manage  
 52 the level of administrative detail required under the new FEMA  
 53 policies and processes, and

54 WHEREAS, faced with the task of applying for, securing, and  
 55 managing FEMA funds on their own, many private communities will  
 56 experience significant delays in receiving funding or in some  
 57 cases may not obtain FEMA reimbursement under these policies at  
 58 all, and

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59 WHEREAS, besides creating a bureaucratic nightmare, the new  
 60 FEMA guidelines pose an enormous problem for local government  
 61 solid waste management systems, and

62 WHEREAS, South Florida municipalities have the proven  
 63 ability to provide citywide coordination of such large-scale  
 64 cleanup efforts and can best provide an economy of scale as well  
 65 as the most reasonable cost for these services, and

66 WHEREAS, the need for solid waste removal does not respect  
 67 private community boundaries, and citizens expect their local  
 68 governments to provide these services regardless of where they  
 69 are located, and

70 WHEREAS, in a city such as Orlando, which operates its own  
 71 solid waste system, the new FEMA policy means that the city  
 72 would have to obtain reimbursement for cleanup through each  
 73 homeowners' association or condominium association for areas  
 74 that the city is already obligated to serve, and

75 WHEREAS, it is in the best interests of the citizens of  
 76 this state for local municipalities to be granted jurisdiction  
 77 for the application and management of FEMA funds in the  
 78 aftermath of a declared disaster, as has been the case in the  
 79 past following other devastating hurricanes, and

80 WHEREAS, it is imperative that the Federal Emergency  
 81 Management Agency reorganize its current policies and  
 82 administrative processes in order to avoid further delays in  
 83 ongoing cleanup and reimbursement efforts resulting from  
 84 Hurricanes Frances, Charley, Jeanne, and Ivan, and to avoid such  
 85 delays in the future, NOW, THEREFORE,

86  
 87 Be It Resolved by the Legislature of the State of Florida:  
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89           That the Congress of the United States is urged to initiate  
90 the review and reorganization of Federal Emergency Management  
91 Agency policies and administrative processes for the purpose of  
92 avoiding delays in cleanup and reimbursement in the aftermath of  
93 declared disasters.

94           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be  
95 dispatched to the President of the United States, to the  
96 President of the United States Senate, to the Speaker of the  
97 United States House of Representatives, and to each member of  
98 the Florida delegation to the United States Congress.