

# Assembly Bill 239 – State-Led Disaster Housing Task Force

## Assemblymember John Harabedian

### **BILL SUMMARY**

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Establishes a State-Led Disaster Housing Task Force to coordinate and streamline efforts between the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD), Office of Emergency Services (OES), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and local governments to rebuild housing in communities affected by the 2025 wildfire disasters in Los Angeles and Ventura Counties.

### **BACKGROUND**

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Based on lessons learned from recent disasters, FEMA recommends that each state establish a State-Led Disaster Housing Task Force (SLDHTF) to develop and regularly update a disaster housing plan. FEMA suggests SLDHTFs lead and coordinate state, local, private sector, and community-based actions to assess housing impacts, identify appropriate post-disaster housing options, and establish processes for expediting post-disaster housing delivery.

Hurricane Harvey caused widespread devastation, with over \$125 billion in damages, making it one of the costliest hurricanes in U.S. history. The storm highlighted critical gaps in Texas's ability to provide timely and efficient housing recovery for displaced residents. Senate Bill 289, enacted by the Texas Legislature in 2019, established a framework to enhance disaster recovery efforts, particularly focusing on housing reconstruction following natural disasters. This coordinating framework will maximize federal, state and local response and help communities build needed housing as soon as possible.

### **PROBLEM**

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Wildfires have caused devastating damage in Los Angeles County, resulting in at least 24 deaths and the destruction of over 12,000 homes and structures. Officials have stated that the full extent of the damage will not be clear until it is safe for investigators to access affected areas. Over 150,000 residents are currently under evacuation orders issued by the sheriff's

department, with tens of thousands more under evacuation warnings.

### **SOLUTION**

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AB 239 will establish a State-Led Disaster Housing Task Force, to coordinate and streamline efforts between HCD, OES, FEMA, and local governments to rebuild housing in communities affected by the wildfire. Provisions of the bill include:

- **Task Force Composition:** The task force will include representatives from HCD, FEMA, OES, and local governments to coordinate housing recovery efforts, streamline communication, and address community-specific challenges. This diverse group ensures alignment of state, federal, and local resources for effective rebuilding in wildfire-impacted areas.
- **State Disaster Housing Coordinator:** Appointed by the task force, the State Disaster Housing Coordinator will oversee funding distribution, provide technical assistance, and coordinate efforts among task force members to expedite housing recovery for impacted communities.
- **Reporting Requirement:** The task force will submit quarterly reports to the Legislature from April 1, 2026, to April 1, 2030, detailing housing recovery progress, challenges, fund distribution, and future plans to ensure accountability and transparency.
- **Urgency Clause:** Due to the level of need and scale of the disaster, this bill includes an urgency clause so the bill becomes effective upon the Governor's signature.

AB 239 will expedite recovery to resiliently build back our communities.

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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