



## Post-Harvey Rebuild

In the wake of the largest disaster in modern Texas history, we must ensure equitable and adequate funding for housing, environmental monitoring, disaster relief, and planning. This also includes better planning by state agencies for the extreme climate realities we are facing.

Through the budget process or as separate legislation, we must require natural resource and state agencies to incorporate disaster preparedness in the reconstruction of internal infrastructure. Agencies like the Texas Water Development Board, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, Texas Parks and Wildlife, Texas Department of Agriculture, Railroad Commission of Texas, Texas Facilities Commission, and others must be ready for the next storm, flood, drought, or wildfire, and plan accordingly.

We must also give local government -- in particular county governments -- the tools they need to deal with climate extremes, flooding, and rebuilding. For example, counties should have authority to adopt modern buildings codes, and inspect buildings to make sure they meet compliance. Making sure local governments have the power they need is key to our rebuilding efforts.

Imagine buying a 2018 Ford Taurus and finding out the car only gets 9 MPG and the wheels fall off when you go over 70 MPH. This is the case for many of our buildings being built today. The inconsistency of building codes and standards creates unrecognized risk and cost to building owners. We need modern architecture built to present-day standards to save energy, and protect against the elements. Building structures must allow space for residents to "shelter in place", which will better protect them during severe weather. This requires buildings to withstand fire, wind, water, and heat/cold.

There are opportunities for the Texas Legislature to make a significant improvement in the states building codes and improve the resiliency of homes and businesses.

Along with these measures to strengthen our state and local response to climate change, it is essential for Texas to invest in modern monitoring equipment. This will give TCEQ the tools it needs to protect communities from spills and emissions releases and common in climate disasters. TCEQ must require companies to stage shutdowns to avoid emissions. There is critical need along the coast to strengthen our above-ground petroleum storage tanks, as well as oil and gas wells to prevent accidents. Our state superfund standards must also be modernized as they are not currently adequate to protect public health and the environment.

## **Sierra Club**

### **2018**