

Support the PREPARED Act

Providing Responsible Emergency Plans for Animals at Risk of Emerging Disasters

What would this bill do?

The PREPARED Act will require facilities regulated by the Animal Welfare Act (AWA) to create, implement, and file with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) contingency plans for protecting animals in their care during emergency or disaster situations. Such facilities, including commercial animal dealers, breeders, exhibitors, and research institutions, will be required to develop plans detailing how they will respond to and recover from potential natural disasters or other emergencies that could affect the animals in their care. Under this legislation, a facility licensed by the USDA under the AWA will need to identify potential emergencies likely to occur at its location and ensure that its employees know what steps to take when a disaster strikes.

Why is the PREPARED Act necessary?

Lack of preparedness during disasters, both natural and manmade, can have especially devastating effects on animals and the people who risk their lives to protect them. Local first-responders and non-governmental agencies most often shoulder the expense and responsibilities related to protecting animals affected by disasters.

Noting the need to protect animals in times of disaster, the USDA finalized a federal rule requiring AWA-regulated animal facilities to develop emergency contingency plans in 2012. However, the agency indefinitely delayed the implementation of this rule, leaving animals at risk. Congress needs to act to help ensure animals are protected during disasters.

Animals in AWA regulated facilities are at particular risk in disasters. For example, Hurricane Katrina killed approximately 8,000 animals, including dogs and monkeys, at Louisiana State University's Health Sciences Center School of Medicine. The storm also

caused the New Orleans Aquarium of the Americas to lose power, resulting in 10,000 fish being killed.

How does the ASPCA help protect animals in times of disaster?

Disaster preparedness and relief are a critical part of the ASPCA's mission. The ASPCA's National Field Response team frequently responds to natural disasters to rescue animals in harm's way. In 2017 alone, the ASPCA responded to six disasters including Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, and the wildfires in California, assisting more than 37,000 animals through pre-evacuation, field rescue, and post-disaster relief efforts. The ASPCA has witnessed firsthand how lack of preparation for disasters can lead to dire consequences for animals left behind.



The ASPCA routinely responds to animals in crisis, including natural disasters