



By Brian Pallasch, CAE

**RESILIENCY. IT'S IN** the news again after the hurricanes in the Southeastern US last year and the Los Angeles wildfires, which started in early January.

Assessing the damage has been sobering. In late January, ABC News reported that “dozens of people are believed to have died in the flames,” and “more than 12,000 structures have been damaged or destroyed in the two fires, with the Eaton Fire the most destructive in Los Angeles history.”

The scale of human loss is heartbreaking. Like thousands of others, I have a personal connection to the recent disasters. I grew up in Southern California, not far from the areas where the fires have spread. I know the region, and I know the towns that have suffered. The damage hits close to home.

Last year's storms included Hurricane Helene, which made landfall in Florida before making its way to western North Carolina, where my son currently attends college. He was unharmed, but as of late October 2024, more than 100 people had died in North Carolina, and at least 231 people across six states had perished from the effects of the storm.

The effects of both the fires in Los Angeles and the damage from Hurricane Helene will be felt for many years as the affected communities work to rebuild.

All signs point to these events being just a few of many to come in the years ahead, as we grapple with a warming world and the changes that will ensue. What can we as building enclosure professionals do to prevent

# Building Resiliency in 2025

such widescale destruction? Our profession will have a large role in addressing these challenges as the focus turns to building more resilient communities.

In the last five years, I have had the opportunity to volunteer with the National Institute of Building Sciences (NIBS), where I currently serve as chair of the NIBS Consultative Council. The Council is tasked with assembling high-level building community representatives to make recommendations directly to the executive and legislative branches of government to improve our nation's buildings and infrastructure. The council membership includes associations representing architects, engineers, government officials, contractors, researchers, and housing officials. The group publishes the annual *Moving Forward* report, which has a changing focus each year. The 2025 report, which is coming soon, will focus on resiliency. Look for the report, and its recommendations, at <https://www.nibs.org/resources/reports>.

At that link you'll also be able to download the *Natural Hazard Mitigation Saves: 2019 Report*, which acknowledges that “natural disasters are growing in frequency and strength” but that “there are measures that communities, local governments, land owners, developers, and tenants can take to reduce the impact of these hazards.” Funded by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, the report presents “the most exhaustive benefit-cost analysis of natural hazard mitigation, from adopting up-to-date building codes and exceeding codes to addressing the retrofit of existing buildings and utility and transportation infrastructure.”

In late 2023, NIBS published its *Resilience Incentivization Roadmap 2.0*, which “mainly focuses on residential buildings subject to flood, and also leaves language and procedures flexible to deal with other perils, occupancies, and locales.” The report presented three key findings:

1. Mitigation saves, but it doesn't do so in proportion to individual stakeholder investments.
2. Co-beneficiaries can share the cost of such investments—but they face similar challenges to those of the property owner.
3. Public-private coordination is essential.

The NIBS roadmap is “aimed at establishing and executing initiatives to bolster disaster resilience” and “encompasses the conceptualization of a certification program tailored to enhance flood resilience, along with the contemplation of three prospective pilot studies.”

At IIBEC, we have a policy position on sustainability and building enclosures (<https://iibec.org/sustainability-and-building-enclosures/>), and we address sustainability across a number of technical resources. (Find these by searching “sustainability” in our Hub, at <https://iibec.org/hub/>). We know the issue will only grow in importance, and IIBEC is working to provide the latest building enclosure expertise on resiliency and on how we can best meet the challenges of our changing environment.