

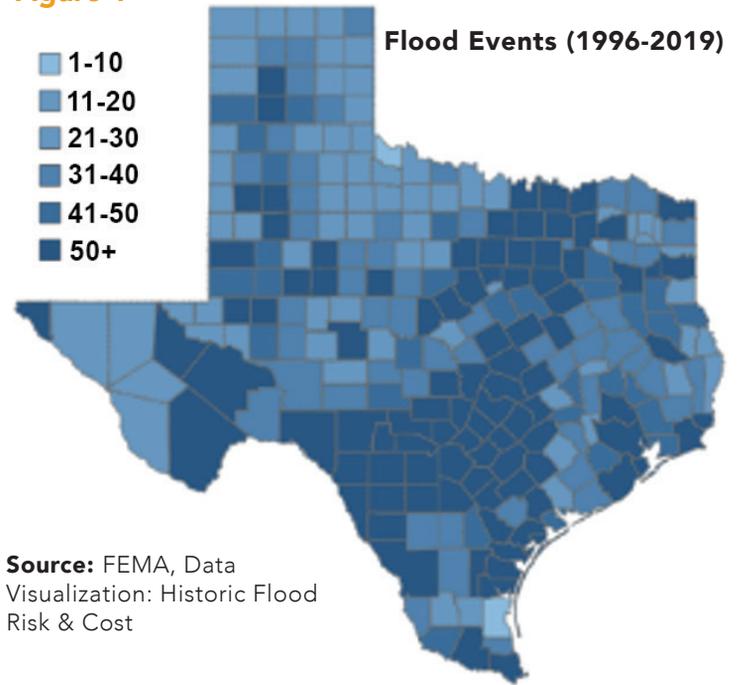
KEY ISSUE: Flood Policy - Expand Collaborative Approaches

The most frequent and costly disasters in Texas and across the United States involve flooding. Flooding poses significant public safety hazards to Texas residents and industry and threatens economic development and growth. In 2017, the greatest storm rainfall event in U.S. history occurred in Texas; Hurricane Harvey killed 103 people, displaced 40,000 flood victims, and damaged more than 300,000 structures, totaling an estimated \$130 billion in damages, according to the National Weather Service. Beyond significant coastal flooding, Texas experiences other types of flooding across the state – such as riverine, stormwater, and structural failure flooding. In fact, each of Texas' 254 counties has endured at least one federally declared flood disaster, according to FEMA (Figure 1). Federal programs have historically provided the largest amount of financial support for flood mitigation and mapping, as well as post-disaster projects located in federally declared disaster areas. However, state and local governments serve on the front lines of flood protection, response, and recovery.

Complex flood programs require significant coordination. Flood management efforts are complex, and significant coordination is required across local, state, and federal levels to navigate extensive program applications, reporting requirements, and funding sources. Budget constraints, data gaps, and place-based variations complicate consideration of federal options and compliance with program requirements. High degrees of uncertainty as to timing and delivery of federal funds create further challenges, especially for small communities that cannot support staff or contractors dedicated to flood projects.

Need for federal funding. Federal matching funds for flood protection through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) have dropped from an estimated \$70 per capita in the mid-1930s to \$11.50 today – far too low relative to the rising needs of local communities. Nationally, federal agencies report positive programmatic returns on investment for pre-storm flood protection, a clear indication of successful federal investment in protecting our population, including a 4:1 return for FEMA Hazard Mitigation; 8:1 return for USACE Flood Control; and an 80:1 return on USACE

Figure 1



Mississippi River and Tributaries Project. TWCA members also report that large-scale regional projects often lack sufficient, dedicated funding sources, which increases the complexity of funding and implementation.

REQUESTS:

Continue collaboration among federal, state, and local flood partners. TWCA supports continuation of federal flood programs, such as the National Flood Insurance Program, when administered through cooperative partnerships with local and regional agencies. TWCA supports opportunities for broad public participation and support, application of established science, objective economic analysis, and government transparency in pursuit of the full array of viable flood protection options that uphold state and local powers and private property rights.

Provide additional federal flood funding for Texas. TWCA requests that USACE and other federal agencies be funded at higher levels to participate in flood risk management projects. TWCA supports a more reliable funding approach, like transportation funding, to keep long-term projects viable and delivered in a timely manner.