

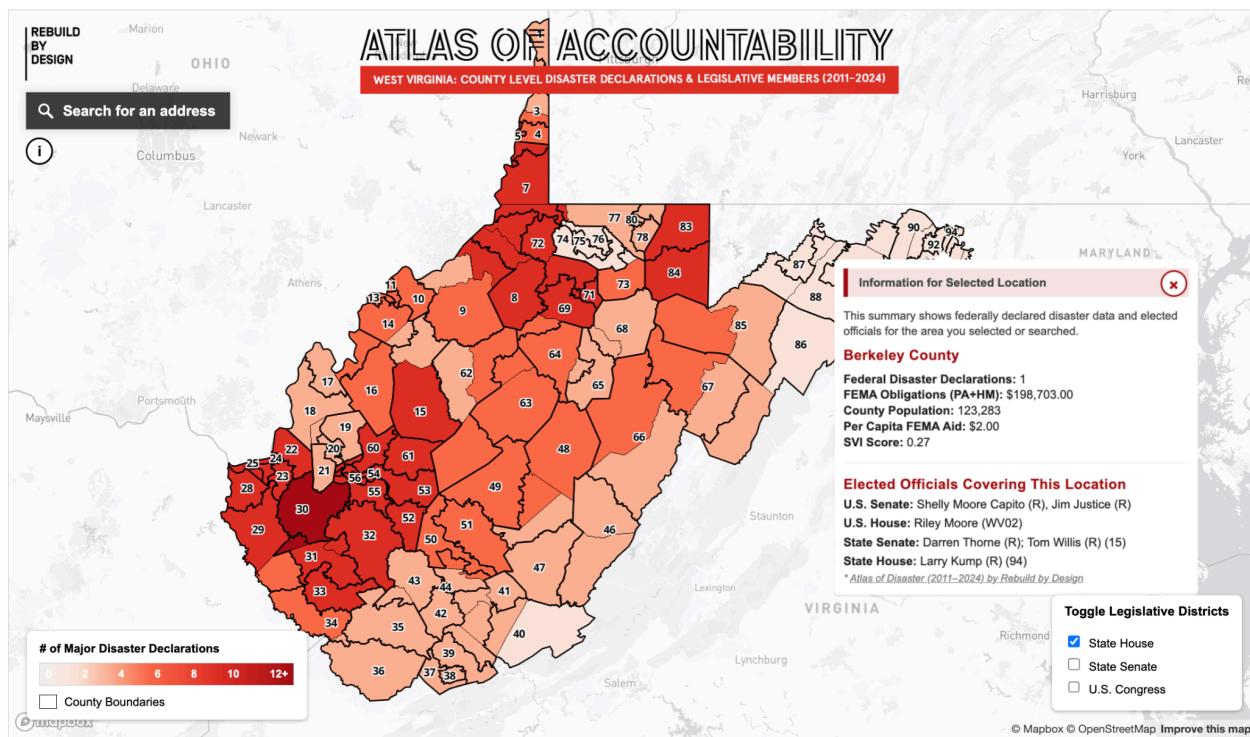
REBUILD BY DESIGN

For more information

Amy Chester, Rebuild by Design: media@rebuildbydesign.org
Institute for Public Knowledge, New York University

NEW REPORT SHOWS WEST VIRGINIA EXPERIENCED 23 MAJOR DISASTERS BETWEEN 2011-2024, CALLS FOR NEW DEDICATED STATE FUNDING SOURCE FOR INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADES

Recent extreme weather events add to a trend of increasing disasters that touch every corner of the state—costing taxpayers millions.



January 26, 2026 | On the heels of a snowy weekend, [Rebuild by Design](#) releases the [Atlas of Disaster: West Virginia](#), a report on West Virginia's recent history of disasters and opportunities to build storm resilience, alongside a statewide legislative representative search tool that

connects residents to the state and federal officials responsible for advancing resilience across the state.

The analysis finds that West Virginia has experienced **23 federally declared disasters** between 2011 and 2024, costing taxpayers more than **\$950 million dollars**. Lincoln County has experienced twelve disasters, the highest in the state. However, all 55 counties in the state have faced recent major disasters, with Wayne County, Roane County, Kanawha County, and Cabell County experiencing nine disasters each.

Among the 23 major declared disasters, 19 involved flooding and 17 involved landslides and mudslides, highlighting the state's acute and persistent flood risk. Flooding is expensive for both individuals and the government, as floodplains are increasingly encroaching on critical infrastructure, including schools, hospitals, highways, and utilities.

"Extreme weather is no longer an occasional disruption for West Virginia—it is a recurring and costly challenge that affects communities statewide," said **Amy Chester, Director of Rebuild by Design**. "The data shows that continuing to rely on emergency response and disaster recovery alone is expensive and puts people and essential services at risk. Long-term infrastructure investment is critical to helping reduce future losses."

To ensure a livable future, it is crucial that the State of West Virginia secures sustainable, long-term funding for resilient infrastructure that will serve as a catalyst to support innovative, data-driven, and community-led approaches to address flood risk. Rebuild by Design calls for new, long-term funding sources for infrastructure enhancements, such as upgrades to sewer infrastructure, raising roads, helping communities move from high-risk areas, and using the land to create green buffers to reduce risk and premature death from extreme weather events.

"West Virginia communities know the devastation caused by flooding all too well," said **Carrie Decker, Community Engagement Manager of West Virginia Rivers**. "It will take collaborative effort across the state to address flood prevention and mitigation. We appreciate the partnership with Rebuild by Design to approach this issue with data and science in order to advance the economic development priorities of the state. With this collaboration, WV Rivers continues with its mission of clean water and healthy communities."

The report calls for creating new sources of dedicated, resilient infrastructure funding through a predictable, flexible, and locally deployable funding mechanism to move from reaction to prevention. The report also calls on the State to leverage funds to create better infrastructure that is built to withstand extreme weather events for its lifespan and is designed to address both physical and social vulnerabilities.

If you would like to be briefed on the report, please reach out to media@rebuildbydesign.org

Rebuild by Design is housed at the Institute for Public Knowledge at NYU and works with communities and local governments to co-design policies, projects, and programs to adapt to the worsening impacts of extreme weather.