



# Disasters & the Law: Katrina & Beyond (Elective Series)

*Daniel A. Farber, James Chen*

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Recent hurricanes and other natural disasters demonstrate serious gaps in the legal system and its ability to respond to events of this magnitude. Innovative policies are needed if society is to deal effectively with the aftermath of these disasters and the risk of future ones. *Disasters and the Law: Katrina and Beyond* studies disaster response, prevention, and mitigation strategies. By integrating knowledge and experience from fields as diverse as urban planning, bankruptcy law, and wetlands law, the authors talk about the legal process in disaster response and reconstruction. Past responses to Hurricane Andrew, the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001 and the Loma Prieta Earthquake also are discussed along with a history of U.S. disaster response efforts.

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¿Katrina alone will involve at least a hundred billion dollars in compensation, insurance, and rebuilding efforts, and lawyers will be heavily involved for at least the remainder of the decade in disputes over these funds. Unfortunately, there is no reason at all to think that Katrina is the last word on disasters. At first glance, disaster law seems to be nothing but a collection of legal rules of various kinds that happen to come into play when communities have suffered severe physical damage. But at a deeper level, disaster law is about assembling the best portfolio of legal rules to deal with catastrophic risks ¿ a portfolio that includes prevention, emergency response, compensation and insurance, and rebuilding strategies. Because of this unifying theme, we think that the topic is deserving of serious law school attention even beyond its newsworthy qualities.¿ Dan Farber

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