

THE FINANCIAL SERVICES ROUNDTABLE

Impacting Policy. Impacting People.



September 22, 2009

Dear Representative Young:

The Roundtable supports legislative efforts to help consumers and businesses invest in their own safety and prepare for natural disasters. Specifically, we would encourage Congress to expeditiously consider three bills, authored by House Homeland Security Committee Chairman Bennie Thompson, which would accomplish this goal: H.R. 3026, the Hazard Mitigation for All Act; H.R. 3027, the Pre-disaster Hazard Mitigation Enhancement Program Act; and H.R. 3028, the First Responder Innovation and Support Act.

The Roundtable believes federal, state, and local governments, along with reinsurers, insurers, and other stakeholders, should aggressively pursue policies that improve and expand hazard mitigation programs, promoting techniques to improve new construction and strengthen existing structures.

- The Hazard Mitigation for All Act (H.R. 3026) would provide Public Housing Agencies with grants to utilize modern storm protection technology in retrofitting Section 8 housing, as well as assisted living facilities.
- The Pre-disaster Hazard Mitigation Enhancement Program Act (H.R. 3027) would encourage states to adopt innovative mitigation projects that have a direct impact for residents of low to moderate income homes, as well as apartment residents and small business owners. Existing programs in Florida and South Carolina have proven effective in incentivizing citizens to further protect their homes from hurricanes. The Roundtable supports these direct consumer mitigation programs, which have a proven track record of reducing risk of loss of life, improving home values and reducing insurance costs over time; in contrast, the track record of programs that dictate mandatory insurance premiums "discounts" reflects numerous challenges and such programs are not, at this time, supported by the Roundtable.
- The First Responder Innovation and Support Act (H.R. 3028) would provide states with grants to assist innovative natural disaster first responder programs.

These bills represent a valuable investment in the future of our communities. Studies conducted by the Congressional Budget Office and National Institute of Building Sciences have shown that mitigation is a cost-effective way to reduce the impact of natural disasters; every dollar spent on pre-disaster mitigation projects leads to a reduction in future losses by more than three dollars.

We urge you to join Chairman Thompson in support of these important bills.

Best regards,

Steve Bartlett
President & CEO