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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2402

October 9, 2009

Dear Colleague:

Our country continues to battle natural disasters that have increased in frequency, severity, and cost to the federal government. In light of this fact, I strongly believe that the nation needs new policies and tools that emphasize pre-disaster planning and mitigation to help save lives, reduce injury, physical damage and recovery costs. For this reason, earlier this year I introduced three bills, H.R. 3027, the Pre-disaster Hazard Mitigation Enhancement Program Act; H.R. 3028, the Hazard Mitigation For All Act; and H.R. 3026, the First Responder Innovation and Support Act. I ask that you review the bills and join me as a co-sponsor.

The Predisaster Hazard Mitigation Enhancement Program Act of 2009 (H.R. 3027). The bill creates a \$100 million competitive grant award program to complement and bolster certain existing grant programs. The new program would be authorized for five years and provide states with funds for projects that have a direct, "on-the-ground" impact for low and moderate income homeowners and residents of single family dwellings, as well as for the residents of apartments and small business owners.

The Hazard Mitigation For All Act of 2009 (H.R. 3028). The bill would provide \$50 million in fiscal years 2010 to 2013 for predisaster mitigation activities for an often excluded segment of our population—residents of public housing authorities, recipients of Section 8 vouchers, and residents of assisted housing. HUD would be responsible for protecting the mitigation investment of the federal government by requiring that homeowners of private Section 8 or assisted housing-eligible property who accept grant funds give an admission preference to housing applicants for a period of five years.

The First Responder Innovation & Support Act of 2009 (H.R. 3026). This bill would provide \$100 million from fiscal year 2010 to 2015 for novel or innovative first responder grants. Innovative programs include projects to address special populations, such as children or the elderly, and projects that serve a particular community need, such as mobile nursing units for rural communities or wireless technologies to improve the interoperability of first responder networks—like that between FEMA and local police forces.

The three bills—the "pre-disaster mitigation package"—has been endorsed by SmarterSafer.org, a diverse ad-hoc coalition of consumer advocacy, taxpayer, environmental and insurance industry groups whose membership includes, among others, the National Wildlife Federation, American Rivers, Americans for Prosperity, the Sierra Club, Plan!tNow, and the Defenders of Wildlife.

When enacted, the programs and initiatives contained in the pre-disaster mitigation package will result in tangible, effective, and long lasting "on-the-ground" benefits for homeowners, small businesses, residents of apartment buildings, and first responders. In particular, through grant funding administered by state and local officials and agencies, the legislation would provide mitigation assistance to low and moderate income families and the communities in which they reside. Again, I welcome your support for the mitigation movement and your co-sponsorship. To co-sponsor H.R. 3026, H.R. 3027 or H.R. 3028, contact Tara Smith @ 55876 or email at tsmith@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,



Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress

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