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BuildStrong Coalition Applauds Congressional Hearing on Government Response to Superstorm Sandy

Hearing held by House Homeland Security Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications examined mitigation and resilience efforts in the wake of the storm and featured testimony from stakeholders involved in disaster response.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The BuildStrong Coalition commends the U.S. House Homeland Security Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response, and Communications for holding a recent field hearing exploring how investments in disaster mitigation made by the city, state, and federal government following Hurricane Sandy have prepared the New York City metropolitan area for another catastrophe. The hearing, titled “A Prepared Community is a Resilient Community,” took place at the Staten Island University Hospital Regina McGinn Educational Center in New York. It featured testimony from stakeholders impacted by Hurricane Sandy and who are likely to be involved in responding to future disasters in the region.

Rep. Dan Donovan (NY-11), the subcommittee’s Chair, helped lead the hearing. “The federal government’s focus on risk mitigation — particularly the concentrated focus after Sandy — will save lives and money in the future,” said Donovan. “It’s a missed opportunity to replace in-kind homes and infrastructure after a disaster, only to leave them just as vulnerable to destruction during future disasters.”

“This hearing indicates that Congress is committed to exploring methods for preventing losses like those incurred during Hurricane Sandy,” said Jimi Grande, chairman of the BuildStrong Coalition. “When looking at disaster mitigation, it’s important to focus on proactive measures designed at reducing losses *before* disasters strike.”

Research – including this [2016 study conducted by the Wharton School of Business of the University of Pennsylvania](#) – has demonstrated that every \$1 invested in pre-disaster mitigation saves approximately \$3 to \$4 in future disaster costs. Yet the [Government Accountability Office reported](#) that, between 2011 and 2014, FEMA spent fourteen times more on its post-disaster Hazard Mitigation Grant Program than it did on its Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program.

H.R. 5177, the National Mitigation Investment Act (NMIA), was recently introduced in Congress by Reps. Carlos Curbelo (FL-26) and Albio Sires (NJ-08) to address this imbalance. By incentivizing and equipping states to adopt and enforce model building codes while initiating the first comprehensive study of disaster costs and losses in over 20 years, the NMIA is designed

to reform the U.S. federal disaster policy to focus on pre-disaster mitigation instead of wasteful post-disaster spending.

BuildStrong – a coalition of national business and consumer organizations, companies, and emergency management officials dedicated to promoting stronger building codes – supports this legislation. For more on the Coalition, visit buildstrongamerica.com.

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