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CONTACT: Phil Anderson
(202) 315-5100

BuildStrong Coalition Engages Policymakers on Disaster Preparedness at the Start of the Atlantic Hurricane Season

Urges Enactment of H.R. 1748, “The Safe Building Code Incentive Act” and H.R. 1471 “The FEMA Disaster Assistance Reform Act of 2015”

WASHINGTON, DC – As the 2015 Hurricane Season begins, the BuildStrong Coalition is renewing its call for Congress and the White House to take action to reduce losses from natural disasters by passing H.R. 1748, “The Safe Building Code Incentive Act;” H.R. 1471, “The FEMA Disaster Assistance Reform Act;” and other legislation that would allocate more resources for investments in pre-disaster mitigation to fortify the U.S. against hurricanes, tornados, floods, earthquakes and other natural and manmade disasters.

The BuildStrong Coalition is working closely with U.S. Rep. Lou Barletta (R-PA), Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management, to spark a conversation about the principles driving U.S. natural disaster policy. As part of this effort, Chairman Barletta held a roundtable discussion with Pennsylvania stakeholders on Thursday, May 28th at the FEMA Region III offices in Philadelphia.

The roundtable focused on disaster losses at the local, state and federal levels and in the private sector, assessing the roles, responsibilities, and principles that should be at the foundation of how our country deals with disasters. Participants included: U.S. Rep. Lou Barletta, Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management; U.S. Rep. Andre Carson, Ranking Member of the House Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management; Derrick J.V. Sawyer, Fire Commissioner of the Philadelphia Fire Department; Mary Ann Tierney, FEMA Regional Administrator of Region III; Howard Kunreuther of the Wharton Risk Center; Richard Flinn, State of Pennsylvania Emergency Manager, and George P. Hartwick, III, Commissioner on the Dauphin County Board of Commissioners.

“The BuildStrong Coalition is proud to partner with Congressman Barletta and other congressional leaders to ensure that we are addressing disaster relief in a cost effective and efficient way,” said Jimi Grande, chairman of the BuildStrong Coalition. “As disaster costs continue to rise, we must find ways to better equip all levels of government and the private sector to prepare for disasters. Doing so could save billions of taxpayer dollars, while also better protecting people and property.”

H.R. 1471, “The FEMA Disaster Assistance Reform Act of 2015,” is a key part of this conversation as it authorizes a much needed assessment of historical trends in U.S. disaster losses and costs and will provide recommendations on ways to reduce these losses over time.

The BuildStrong Coalition is also urging Congress and the White House to pass its signature legislation, H.R. 1748, “The Safe Building Code Incentive Act,” by bringing together first responders, architects, engineers, insurers, and other stakeholders to engage policymakers on Capitol Hill at the start of Hurricane Season. The coalition has produced a short [video](#) on the bill to help educate lawmakers on the importance of strong building standards in reducing losses from natural catastrophes.

“Action is needed to protect our communities and lower the burden on the American taxpayer, and we know mitigation through the adoption of model-building codes is the key to accomplishing both of these goals,” said U.S. Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart (R-FL), the lead sponsor of “The Safe Building Code Incentive Act.”

BuildStrong is a coalition of national business and consumer organizations, companies, and emergency management officials dedicated to promoting stronger building codes. The BuildStrong Coalition urges enactment of “The Safe Building Code Incentive Act.” This legislation would encourage states to adopt model building codes to protect property and ultimately save lives from the devastation of natural disasters.

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