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## **Federal Lawmakers Continue Discussion on Disaster Preparedness and Assistance**

**WASHINGTON, DC** – Today the BuildStrong Coalition commended U.S. Rep. Lou Barletta (R-PA) and members of the Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings and Emergency Management for advancing discussions on disaster preparedness and assistance. BuildStrong is working closely with Rep. Barletta, Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management to hold a series of roundtable discussions centered on the principles driving U.S. natural disaster policy.

Members of the subcommittee gathered today in Washington, DC for Rep. Barletta's second roundtable. Other participants of the roundtable included representatives from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), the Government Accountability Office (GAO), and experts from state and local government. The first roundtable was held on May 28, 2015 in Philadelphia.

"From my time as chief of the Miami-Dade Fire Department to my time as administrator of FEMA, I have been on both the receiving and giving end of federal disaster assistance," said David Paulison, former administrator of FEMA and a senior advisor to the BuildStrong Coalition, during today's roundtable. "The federal government is currently investing only one dollar on preventive measures for every six dollars spent on recovery. As the cost of natural disasters rise, this is a critical conversation to have. By directing more money to pre-disaster federal incentive programs run through FEMA, we can encourage states and localities to address the types of losses that are most preventable – to residential homes and buildings – and save billions of dollars in the process."

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 disasters.

"I think states would be more likely to adopt model codes if we could package incentives together . . . If the incentives are significant enough, people will choose to do things that should be common sense," said Congressman Lou Barletta, Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management.

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.

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 the 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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