



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **First Hurricane Watch of 2014 Issued for Atlantic Coast: America Needs a Natural Disaster Mitigation Strategy Now**

WASHINGTON, DC – With Tropical Storm Arthur picking up steam along the Atlantic Coast, the BuildStrong Coalition renewed its call for Congress and the White House to move quickly on a series of bills that would fortify the nation against hurricanes and other natural disasters.

“Hurricane season is upon us. Weather experts are predicting three to five hurricane events this year. As the first named storm of 2014, Tropical Storm Arthur provides a stark reminder of the importance of promoting common sense mitigation legislation that will better protect property, save lives and ultimately reduce taxpayer exposure to natural disasters,” said Jimi Grande, Chairman of the BuildStrong Coalition.

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, there have been 151 weather-related disasters since 1980 that have exceeded \$1 billion in economic losses. The total cost of these catastrophes exceeds \$1 trillion.

BuildStrong is encouraging policymakers to approve the following four bills:

**The Safe Building Code Incentive Act of 2013 (H.R. 1878 & S. 924) – Introduced by Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart (R-FL-25) and Sen. Robert Menendez (D-NJ),** this bipartisan bill provides additional disaster relief assistance to states that adopt and enforce strong building codes.

**The Disaster Savings Account Act (H.R. 3989 & S. 1991) – Introduced by Rep. Dennis Ross (R-FL-15), Sen. James Inhofe (R-OK) and Sen. Mark Begich (D-AK),** this bipartisan bill provides a \$5,000 tax deduction for money deposited into a savings account to offset disaster mitigation costs.

**The Disaster Savings and Resilient Construction Act of 2013 (H.R. 2241) – Introduced by Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart,** this bill provides tax credits to homeowners and contractors who utilize modern building science when constructing and/or renovating homes and buildings.

**The National Windstorm Impact Reduction Act Reauthorization of 2013 (H.R. 1786) -** Introduced by Rep. Randy Neugebauer (R-TX-19), this bill authorizes funding for increased research into reducing the economic and human toll of windstorms.

The BuildStrong Coalition is bringing emergency management experts, first responders and other stakeholders together to promote a natural disaster mitigation strategy consisting of the above-mentioned bills. The coalition is especially grateful for the leadership provided by Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart of Florida.

“As a member of Congress from a hurricane-prone state, Rep. Diaz understands all too well the devastation that can ensue from hurricanes and other natural disasters. He is providing strong leadership in Congress to raise awareness of the vital role that strong building codes and other mitigation measures can play in protecting homeowners, small businesses and entire communities from weather-related catastrophes,” Grande said.

Earlier this spring, the BuildStrong Coalition sponsored its Second Annual National Thought Leaders Forum with the Congressional Fire Services Institute (CFSI) on the importance of building codes and disaster mitigation. Several leaders from Congress, who are actively involved in disaster mitigation issues, spoke at the forum, including Rep. Mario Diaz Balart (R-FL), U.S. Sen. Mark Begich (D-AK), U.S. Rep. Lou Barletta (R-PA), U.S. Rep. Randy Neugebauer (R-TX) and U.S. Rep. Elizabeth Etsy (D-CT). [Click here to read the full report.](#)

BuildStrong also launched an advertising campaign to coincide with hurricane season that appeared in newspapers on Capitol Hill. [Click here to read the first ad of the campaign.](#)

*BuildStrong is a coalition of national business and consumer organizations, corporations and emergency management officials dedicated to stronger building codes, in order to protect homes and buildings from the devastation of natural disasters. For a complete list of members and additional information, please visit [www.BuildStrongAmerica.com](http://www.BuildStrongAmerica.com).*

*You can also view a short video on the coalition and its activities on Capitol Hill. [Please click here.](#)*

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