

30 November 2011

The Honorable Ralph M. Hall
Chairman
2405 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson
Ranking Member
2468 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Hall and Ranking Member Johnson:

The American Geophysical Union (AGU), on behalf of its 60,000 Earth and space scientists, writes to you in support of the Natural Hazards Risk Reduction Act of 2011. The economic, public health, and safety consequences of natural hazards, such as earthquakes, hurricanes, and tornadoes, can be devastating and no state or region in the U.S. is immune.

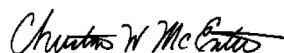
In 39 states, 75 million people live in areas at significant risk of an earthquake. From January 2000 through September 2011, there were more than 43,500 earthquakes in the U.S.; half of those were magnitude 3.0 or greater. USGS is the only agency responsible for monitoring these hazards and is renowned worldwide for its work. Cuts to these programs would endanger millions of Americans.

More than 18,000 people died and more than one-third of a trillion dollars in damage was done (in 2006 dollars) as a result of the 30 costliest hurricanes and tropical storms in U.S. mainland history. Funding for programs such as the National Hurricane Center and the Hurricane Hunter Jet is crucial to provide lifesaving data and helps determine a hurricane's path.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration forecasts, warnings and the associated responses produce approximately \$3 billion in savings during a typical hurricane season. From 2001-2005 alone, there were more than 6,600 tornadoes in the U.S.; the only state not affected was Rhode Island. Combined, the ten costliest tornadoes since 1950 caused more than \$9 billion in damage (in 2007 dollars).

Each dollar spent on mitigation related to wind, flooding, and earthquakes saves society an average of four dollars. Federal agencies provide critical research, education, and tools that increase our understanding of and inform the public about the threat of natural hazards. We ask you to support these life-saving programs.

Sincerely,



Christine McEntee
Executive Director/CEO
American Geophysical Union