

THE STRONG ACT OF 2012: STRENGTHENING THE RESILIENCY OF OUR NATION ON THE GROUND

Extreme weather is, and will continue to be, a major challenge for our nation. In the past 30 years, there have been more than 130 weather-related disasters in the United States that each generated at least \$1 billion in damages. Most recently, Superstorm Sandy devastated the eastern United States, resulting in more than 100 deaths, the evacuation of hundreds of thousands of people from their homes, power outages affecting more than 8.5 million homes, massive flooding, gasoline shortages, and a crippled regional energy and transportation infrastructure. In fact, extreme weather ravaged every region of the U.S. this year, with drought conditions in more than 60 percent of the contiguous United States; deadly floods; Tropical Storm Debby in Florida; Hurricane Isaac in Louisiana; destructive wildfires on more than 9 million acres across 37 States; power outages affecting more than 3.4 million homes due to severe summer storms; and deadly heat waves.

These events and our recent history with Hurricane Katrina and its long-term impacts on the economy and livelihoods of those living in the Gulf Coast region, make it clear that we need to become more resilient to extreme weather. By building stronger communities, we can reduce the serious economic and human costs of extreme weather over the short and long term. For every \$1 spent now on disaster preparedness and resilience-building, we can avoid at least \$4 in future losses. It is clear that we need to make our nation stronger and more resilient against extreme weather or face an increasingly more expensive and deadly future.

WHAT DOES THE STRONG ACT DO?

This legislation builds upon existing extreme weather resiliency efforts to provide state and local planners with the tools and information they need to develop and improve local extreme weather resiliency. Specifically, this bill directs the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy to chair a high-level interagency working group to first conduct an assessment of Federal agencies' current and planned activities related to short-and long-term extreme weather resilience across key sectors and then develop a plan to support State, local, and private and public sector resiliency efforts. Key, interdependent sectors include: agriculture; forestry and natural resources management; water management; energy supply and transmission; infrastructure, including transportation, water and wastewater and coastal infrastructure; public health and healthcare infrastructure; communications; housing and other buildings, national security; insurance; and emergency preparedness. A federal advisory group composed of private and public representatives will play a key consultative role throughout the process, as will an advisory group composed of State, local and tribal representatives.

This bill will help maximize government resources and funding by promoting coordination of existing Federal efforts and addressing gaps to ensure that the Federal government is better supporting local and state governments and the American public in short- and long-term preparedness efforts. By better arming state and local planners with the tools they need, we can reduce the serious economic and human costs of extreme weather and make our nation stronger.