

**The Honorable Sam Graves, Ranking Republican Member  
Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings  
and Emergency Management**

**Hearing on “Saving Lives and Money through the Pre-  
disaster Mitigation Program”**

**April 30, 2008**

**[WHEN RECOGNIZED]**

THANK YOU, MADAM CHAIR NORTON, FOR  
HOLDING THIS HEARING.

I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO THANK OUR WITNESSES  
FOR BEING HERE TODAY TO TESTIFY ON THE  
BENEFITS OF THE PRE-DISASTER MITIGATION  
PROGRAM.

TODAY'S HEARING WILL FOCUS ON THE REAUTHORIZATION OF THE PRE-DISASTER MITIGATION PROGRAM ADMINISTERED BY FEMA. THE PRE-DISASTER MITIGATION PROGRAM, UNDER SECTION 203 OF THE STAFFORD ACT, SUNSETS ON SEPTEMBER 30, 2008.

THE PRE-DISASTER MITIGATION PROGRAM WAS ORIGINALLY AUTHORIZED BY THE DISASTER MITIGATION ACT OF 2000 AS A PILOT PROGRAM TO STUDY THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MITIGATION GRANTS GIVEN TO COMMUNITIES BEFORE DISASTER STRIKES. PRIOR TO THE CREATION OF THE PRE-DISASTER MITIGATION PROGRAM, HAZARD MITIGATION PRIMARILY OCCURRED AFTER A DISASTER THROUGH FEMA'S HAZARD MITIGATION GRANT PROGRAM.

EVERY DISASTER COSTS US IN DAMAGES TO HOMES, BUSINESSES AND INFRASTRUCTURE AND POTENTIALLY IN THE LOSS OF LIVES.

THE PRE-DISASTER MITIGATION PROGRAM PREVENTS DAMAGE AND DESTRUCTION BY HELPING COMMUNITIES TO ACT PROACTIVELY, THROUGH PLANNING AND PROJECTS THAT REDUCE THE COSTS AND LIMIT THE ADVERSE IMPACTS OF FUTURE DISASTERS.

WITH FEMA'S ASSISTANCE, LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IDENTIFY COST EFFECTIVE MITIGATION PROJECTS. WHEN APPROVED, THESE PROJECTS MAY BE FUNDED BY THE PRE-DISASTER MITIGATION PROGRAM, WHICH OPERATES AS A COMPETITIVE AWARD GRANT PROGRAM.

SINCE ITS INCEPTION, THE PRE-DISASTER MITIGATION PROGRAM HAS ASSISTED LOCAL COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY AND HAS HELPED FUND A WIDE RANGE OF MITIGATION PROJECTS, SUCH AS MITIGATION PLANS, BUYOUTS, AND IMPROVED SHELTERS.

IN 2005, THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF BUILDING SCIENCES ISSUED A STUDY THAT CONCLUSIVELY DEMONSTRATED FEDERAL MITIGATION PROGRAMS SAVE THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT MONEY. SPECIFICALLY, THE STUDY FOUND THAT FOR EVERY DOLLAR SPENT ON MITIGATION, THE AMERICAN TAXPAYER SAVES OVER \$3 DOLLARS IN FEDERAL DISASTER PAYMENTS.

IN SHORT, MITIGATION WORKS. IT SAVES LIVES, LIMITS FUTURE DAMAGE, AND REDUCES FEDERAL DISASTER COSTS. THE PRE-DISASTER MITIGATION PROGRAM IS A WORTHY PROGRAM, AND I LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH THE CHAIR TO REAUTHORIZE IT THIS YEAR.

AGAIN, I WOULD LIKE TO THANK OUR WITNESS FOR BEING HERE TODAY AND I LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR TESTIMONY.