

They were there during the violent storms—the storm in Las Vegas and the one in Reno.

I cannot stress enough how important FEMA was to the people of the State of Nevada. They move in quickly, set up first aid and relief stations, and constructed temporarily shelters. They set up a Federal office where they would meet with people to talk with them about their losses, whether or not there were emergency loans available.

After the worst was over, FEMA, through something called “Project Impact,” set up a disaster mitigation project. In effect, what it did after the flood, was to help in Las Vegas to reduce Las Vegas’ vulnerability to floods. Project Impact offers seed money to help cities all around the country allay the effects of natural disasters.

In Las Vegas, officials worked with State and local officials on waste, to upgrade the sewer system, build ducts, install backlog valves to prevent flood waters from entering homes, and install barriers to prevent similar disasters from happening again. Project Impact has made a real difference in Nevada.

The former mayor of Las Vegas, Jan Jones, said Las Vegas could not have gotten through the floods without the assistance of project impact.

I credit this project with helping hundreds and hundreds of Nevadans bounce back from a very difficult time.

Most recently, in fact yesterday, I was doing a radio program, National Public Radio, with Juan Williams. The program was interrupted because of the earthquake that took place at about 11:15 a.m. in Washington State. At the time I was on the radio program and he did not indicate the severity of the quake.

Yesterday’s earthquake survivors were fortunate that the quake occurred deep in the ocean, some 30 miles underground. Even though it was almost 7 on the Richter scale, the loss of life was minimal. At this point we only know of one person who died as a result of that very severe earthquake. Several hundred have been hospitalized, and several of them are hurt badly, but the impact, because of where it occurred, was lessened.

Project Impact is a program that works. In the State of Nevada, with the money allocated to FEMA under Project Impact, the city is working on bracing schools, water tanks, working on bookshelves—things like that. The same is taking place, as we speak, in Seattle. Furniture and computers are being restored or repaired, and they have trained 1,600 homeowners to shore up their own houses.

I give this brief background to indicate that I think this new administration, wants to wipe out Government waste, they want to cut Federal spending, as we all do. I commend this administration for that. They want to save whatever money they can and return it back to the people in the form of tax cuts, and that is the right thing

to do. But with all the good Project Impact has done, it is hard to understand why President Bush has targeted this program for elimination in his budget.

In the budget proposal, the outline which was presented to Congress yesterday, the President canceled FEMA’s Project Impact, saying that the \$25 million Federal-city program has not been effective.

I ask President Bush to reconsider. I am deeply concerned, because from the experience we have had in Nevada, this is a good program.

I am also very concerned that the President plans to cut overall FEMA spending by 17 percent. This is wrong. He is going to cut this program by about \$400 million, forcing us to come back with a supplemental and put this money in anyway.

I do not know where the natural disasters are going to take place in America today. I do not know where the floods are going to take place. I do not know where the fires are going to take place. I do not know where the earthquakes are going to take place. But they are going to take place sometime during this fiscal year, and FEMA must have the money and resources to meet these emergencies.

When people are hurt, when people are afraid, we need to have the Federal Emergency Management Agency have the resources to take care of these people. FEMA has done a remarkably good job. They have become so much better than they were.

I say that our President, must take a look at what his people have recommended be done. This is the President’s budget. He makes the ultimate decision. But I want those people who are working with President Bush to take another look at this. We cannot—we should not—eliminate \$400 million from FEMA because, I repeat, even with the full funding, it is very likely we are going to have to come back, as we do every year, for more money for these emergencies.

Late yesterday, President Bush dispatched his new Director of FEMA, Joe Allbaugh, to the State of Washington. President Bush said Mr. Allbaugh would work with State and local officials to provide whatever help he could to the people of the State of Washington.

We have seen the pictures of Washington after the quake—the still pictures in newspapers—and we have seen the disaster more vividly on television. Seattle and other places in the State of Washington have very serious problems, and Seattle is showing the Nation exactly why FEMA funding is necessary and the real impact some of these budget cuts would have on our cities.

The State of Washington needs these moneys. Project Impact is a major reason that damage to Seattle was not more serious than it was.

So as we find ourselves in this tax and budget debate, these are the de-

tails we have to account for these emergencies.

I know Nevadans want a tax cut, and I know the people of Alabama want a tax cut. In every State of the Union, people want a tax cut. Nevadans and all Americans have worked hard to ensure this surplus. We have worked hard and they have worked hard to get it. They deserve a major tax cut. It is time to reach a compromise to make sure they can receive a fair tax cut, but it has to be one that pays down the debt and protects Social Security.

We have to give people their fair share of a tax cut, but that does not eliminate programs such as FEMA. It has to leave money so we can have a prescription drug benefit. It has to leave money so we can do the things we need to do regarding education.

So just as families plan for unexpected demands on their resources, we have the responsibility to ensure that this Nation has resources to respond to its emergencies, such as the floods I have talked about in Nevada and this earthquake that took place yesterday in Seattle.

In the past, parts of our Nation have been devastated by unyielding wildfires and unforgiving hurricanes and earthquakes. Unfortunately, we will have these emergencies.

I believe it is our responsibility to account for these inevitable commitments. The best way to do that is by preparing for the worst, not by reacting when lives have been taken and property has been destroyed. We need to be prepared, and we cannot be if we are going to cut Federal Emergency Management Agency funding by 17 percent. Certainly, we should not cancel FEMA’s Project Impact moneys. These moneys are very important.

As I said, with Seattle, Project Impact has helped make Seattle buildings more earthquake resistant. Without this, problems in the State of Washington would even be worse.

Mr. President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BENNETT. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SESSIONS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

RULES OF THE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Rules of Procedure of the Committee on Armed Services, as adopted yesterday by the Committee, be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows: