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House of Representatives

The House met at 9 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. CULBERSON).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
June 26, 2001.

I hereby appoint the Honorable JOHN ABNEY CULBERSON to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

J. DENNIS HASTERT,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING HOUR DEBATES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2001, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning hour debates. The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to not to exceed 25 minutes, and each Member, except the majority leader, the minority leader, or the minority whip, limited to not to exceed 5 minutes, but in no event shall debate extend beyond 9:50 a.m.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) for 5 minutes.

PROJECT IMPACT

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, numerous natural events of the past few months, including the earthquake in the State of Washington and Tropical Storm Allison of just recent days in Texas and Louisiana, have underscored our need for disaster preparedness.

What we have learned from these events is that we can in fact save lives and money by making investments up

front to protect our communities. What we have learned is that what we do in the beginning by hardening the sites, preparing people's responses, moving out of harm's way, has an overwhelming payback, a payback not just in money but in lives saved and injury and human misery avoided.

As was pointed out in yesterday's Washington Post, spending money in disaster mitigation pays off. It has often been cited that in the great flood of 1993, Charles County, Missouri, suffered \$26 million in damages. However, the same area, after a significant buyout and a similar flood 2 years later, caused only \$300,000 in damage.

Our friends at the Federal Emergency Management Agency believe that in the past 8 years the buyout programs of the Federal government have received a 200 percent rate of return in investment in disaster mitigation.

It is frustrating that, in the wake of these tragedies, the Bush administration and its Office of Management and Budget have proposed cutting funds for several of these Federal mitigation programs, including FEMA's Project Impact.

Mr. Speaker, I have had significant opportunity to interact with the men and women working with Project Impact. This was one of the creations of former Director James Lee Witt that has in fact earned him international recognition.

I have seen that, contrary to the administration's assertion that Project Impact has not proven effective, I have seen Project Impact leverage even a modest Federal investment in my own community to be a lynchpin for additional commercial investments, as well as careful planning and consideration by local government.

I had an opportunity last fall to address the Conference of Project Impact Volunteers. One of the most important aspects of this program is the development of the human infrastructure to

aid in disaster mitigation. It is hard to imagine a Federal investment doing more than to produce these dedicated volunteers making the difference in making these programs work.

Project Impact is not a grant program. It provides seed money to build disaster-resistant communities. It is a commonsense approach to help communities protect themselves. It offers expertise and technical assistance. It puts the latest technology and mitigation practices into the hands of local communities, and most important, it brings people together to understand how they can solve their own problems.

Started just 5 years ago with seven pilot projects across the country, there are now 2,500 Project Impact business partners, including Federal agencies like NASA, that are working in 250 Project Impact communities.

Mr. Speaker, Joe Allbaugh, a longtime friend and Bush appointee, the new Director of FEMA, has pointed out that he is deeply impressed by the "swift and tangible results," his words, of buy-out programs and other efforts to mitigate the cost of disasters before they strike. I know from the news accounts that he has taken his budget concerns to the bean-counters at OMB who need to understand the potential benefits of continuing this program.

I must commend the Bush administration for understanding the potential of using reform in other contexts. I appreciate and applaud their putting money in the budget that signifies reform of the National Flood Insurance Program.

The gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. BEREUTER) and I for the last 2 years have been working to reform the flood insurance program so it is no longer subsidizing people to live in areas where it is repeatedly shown that it is dangerous and inappropriate.

I hope the administration will build on this notion of reform that they are proposing in flood insurance and carry

This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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