their resources to help in the disaster efforts. From the Red Cross and Salvation Army, to local and federal agencies such as the Harris County Police and Fire Department, to the Texas Medical Center, to the United States Coast Guard, to the dedicated elected officials, to name just a few; they all made special efforts and sacrifices and today, we honor them for their service and dedication to their fellow citizens.

The pending resolution calls our attention to our recent failure to ensure that we will be able to aid victims of Allison and future disasters. Just last week, while the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) was working diligently to help the victims of Tropical Storm Allison, the House passed H.R. 2216, the FY2001 Supplemental Appropriations Act, containing a provision, which many of us strongly opposed, to rescind $389 million in disaster relief funds from FEMA.

Currently, FEMA is assessing the impact of Tropical Storm Allison on Texas, Louisiana, and Florida, and it expects to request additional funds to address these pressing needs. More than 25,000 flood insurance claims are expected from Texas in the wake of the combined impact of the various storms. FEMA is projecting the flood insurance claims for Tropical Storm Allison in Texas and Louisiana alone will exceed $350 million.

The proposed rescission could preclude FEMA’s ability to pay these claims and it might limit assistance to future victims of disasters and necessitate another supplemental spending bill. The rescission eliminates much of the funding needed by the agency to provide quick and effective assistance to disaster-stricken communities and victims. The most recent disasters highlight the fact that these funds could be needed by FEMA to pay for natural disasters occurring in FY2001. They should not be rescinded.

Moreover, with the increases in climate change brought on by global warming, we should be prepared for more natural disasters. According to recent data, in 1999, the United States experienced the warmest January-March period since we began keeping these records 106 years ago. Climate change and these patterns are expected to cause further damage. These temperature changes can lead to more extreme weather events, including droughts, floods, and hurricanes.

Over the past decade we have seen a marked increase in natural disasters and this trend is expected to continue. FEMA data show that more frequent and severe weather calamities and other natural phenomena during the past decade required 460 major disasters declarations, nearly double the 237 declarations from the previous ten-year period, and more than any other decade on record. The increased number and severity of natural disasters has huge economic impacts on the United States. Comparing the three-year periods of 1989 through 1991, and 1997 through 1999, the federal cost of severe weather disasters increased 337 percent in less than ten years. Of the $35 billion that FEMA has spent in the last 20 years for disaster relief, $28 billion, or 80 percent, has occurred in the last seven years alone (1993-2000). In addition, the insurance industry has paid more than $33 billion in insured losses in these seven years.

Fortunately, the Senate Appropriations Committee has reported its Supplemental Appropriations bill and it does not contain the $389 million rescission from FEMA’s contingency fund. I am hopeful that the conference report on this bill will accept the House provision on FEMA’s rescission. We are all aware of the critical and fundamental support that FEMA provides for the victims of natural disasters. It is essential that we do not hinder FEMA’s mission by allowing unauthorized rescissions or cuts to FEMA’s budget.

Again, I commend the numerous individuals, government agencies, and groups of people in Texas who heroically gave of themselves and assisted their fellow citizens through a major disaster. They serve as an inspiration to us all and I pledge to work together with FEMA and other agencies on behalf of these victims to help them rebuild their lives and renew their spirits.

I urge all Members to support H. Res. 166. Mr. CRENshaw, Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Res. 166, which honors the men and women, community organizations and businesses, and the government entities that provided relief and assistance to the people of Texas in the wake of Tropical Storm Allison.

It is truly times like these, when Mother Nature strikes suddenly and strongly, that communities must come together to help people whose homes and businesses are damaged or destroyed and who might have suffered loss of life within their families. It is a true testament to the spirit of community to see neighbors selflessly helping neighbor in these circumstances, and I commend the men and women who lent of their time, energy, money, resources, and friendship to make the flooding in Houston and its suburbs less painful for their neighbors.

While the damage was not nearly so severe, I would be remiss if I did not mention the community spirit of Floridians who helped to reduce the pain and suffering that tropical storm Allison brought to the people of Florida. For instance, local fire and rescue workers attempted to save swimmers who regrettably drowned off of Florida Panhandle beaches in the storm-tossed waters of the Gulf. They also worked and were caught off guard by the flooding in Tallahassee and elsewhere in North Florida. Also, electric company and utility employees worked to keep power, water, and information flowing into people’s homes and businesses as North Florida was pelted with heavy rain, 40–55 mile-per-hour winds, and 15-foot waves.

In their honor, as well, that I ask my colleagues to support this resolution.

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in support of H. Res. 166 and applaud Ms. JACkSON-Lee for introducing this resolution. H. Res. 166 commends the many volunteers, public safety officials, agencies, and businesses that rose to the challenge of tropical storm Allison. The storm took 22 lives and caused at least $4.8 billion in property damage.

Living in San Francisco, in an area that is prone to natural disasters, I appreciate the commitment and heroism shown by so many people in the wake of a major natural disaster. Thanks to many brave and generous individuals, Houston and the communities around it pulled through the storm and are on the road to recovery.

I came back this morning from Houston, where I had the great pleasure of meeting my 6th grandchild, who was born on Sunday. While the damage in the area is clearly visible, so are the signs of healing. For my own family and all the people who call Houston home, I was pleased to see the recovery already under way. I urge my colleagues to support this resolution.

Mr. COOKSEY. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.