

The PDM program provides technical and financial assistance to State and local governments to reduce injuries, loss of life, and damage to property caused by natural disasters. Examples of mitigation activities include: seismic retrofitting of buildings to strengthen the buildings in case of an earthquake; acquiring repetitively flooded homes; installing shutters and shatter-resistant windows in hurricane-prone areas; and building “safe rooms” in houses and buildings to protect people from high winds.

Consideration of this bill today is crucial, as the PDM program is set to sunset with the expiration of the current continuing resolution. Therefore, Congress must take quick action to continue this vital program.

H.R. 1746, as amended, reauthorizes the PDM program for three years, at a level of \$180 million for fiscal year 2011, and \$200 million for each of fiscal years 2012 and 2013. The bill increases the minimum amount that each state receives under the program from \$500,000 to \$575,000, and codifies the competitive selection process of the program, as currently administered by FEMA.

In 1988, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure authorized FEMA’s Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. This effective program provides grants to communities to mitigate hazards, but only provides grants to “build better” after a disaster. At the time, no program existed to help communities mitigate risks from all hazards before disaster strikes.

In the 1990s, under the leadership of FEMA Administrator James Lee Witt, FEMA developed a PDM pilot program known as “Project Impact”, which was a predecessor program to the current PDM program. Congress appropriated funds for Project Impact in each of fiscal years 1997 through 2001.

The PDM program reduces the risk of natural hazards, which is where the preponderance of risk is in our country. While it is prudent to prepare for the possibility of terrorist attacks, the occurrence of natural disasters of all types and sizes is a known certainty. The flooding that is currently occurring in California, and the tornadoes that struck in my home state of Minnesota this summer, particularly in Wadena in my district, are examples of the tragic, real impact of natural disasters that occur in our nation every year.

Mitigation saves money. Studies by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) and National Institute of Building Sciences show that for every dollar invested in PDM projects, future losses are reduced by three to four dollars. In 2005, the Multihazard Mitigation Council, an advisory body of the National Institute of Building Sciences, found “that a dollar spent on mitigation saves society an average of \$4.” Further, the Multihazard Mitigation Council found that flood mitigation measures yield even greater savings. According to a September 2007 CBO report on the reduction in Federal disaster assistance that is likely to result from the PDM program, “on average, future losses are reduced by about \$3 (measured in discounted present value) for each \$1 spent on those projects, including both federal and nonfederal spending.”

While empirical data is critical, perhaps more telling are real-life mitigation “success stories”. For instance, Seattle, Washington

used Project Impact PDM grants to fortify buildings. Immediately after the Nisqually Earthquake struck Seattle on February 28, 2001, Seattle Mayor Paul Schell and other public officials cited those PDM grants as one of the primary reasons that lives and property were saved during the earthquake. Ironically, the Mayor’s statements came on the same day that the President George W. Bush Administration claimed that the Project Impact PDM pilot program should be defunded because it was not effective.

Another example of the effectiveness of mitigation comes from my district. On July 4, 1999, a derecho, also known as a blow down, struck the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness and downed millions of trees. This created a huge fire hazard. As a result, FEMA mitigation funds were given to residents to install outdoor sprinkler systems to protect against wild fire. Unfortunately, in 2007, the Ham Lake Fire struck the area. Those structures that had sprinkler systems were protected from the fire. Since that time, communities in that area have sought and have been awarded more than \$3 million of PDM funds to help protect other structures from this continuing risk of fire.

Mitigation is an investment. It is an investment that not only benefits the Federal Government, but State and local governments as well. Projects funded by the PDM program reduce the damage that would be paid for by the Federal Government for a major disaster under the Stafford Act. However, mitigation also reduces the risks from smaller, more frequent events that State and local governments face every day.

The PDM program takes citizens out of harm’s way, by elevating a house or making sure a hospital can survive a hurricane or earthquake. In doing so, it allows first responders to focus on what is unpredictable in a disaster rather than on what is foreseeable and predictable.

H.R. 1746, as amended, eliminates the existing sunset in the program. As the evidence clearly shows, this program works well and is cost effective. It should no longer be treated as a pilot program with a sunset. Rather, State and local governments should have the certainty of knowing this program will be available in the future to enable them to focus their efforts on critical, long-term mitigation planning.

The Obama administration has specifically requested that Congress reauthorize the PDM program and this legislation has been endorsed by the National Association of Counties, International Association of Emergency Managers, the Association of State Floodplain Managers, the National Emergency Management Association, the National Association of Flood and Stormwater Management Agencies, and the American Public Works Association.

This bill passed the House more than a year and a half ago with overwhelming bipartisan support. The legislation passed the other body last night by unanimous consent. I would like to thank Senator JOSEPH LIEBERMAN and Senator SUSAN M. COLLINS for their persistent efforts to clear this legislation through the other body.

I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting H.R. 1746, as amended, the “Predisaster Hazard Mitigation Act of 2010”.

Ms. NORTON. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) that the House suspend the rules and concur in the Senate amendment to the bill, H.R. 1746.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the Senate amendment was concurred in.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF SENATE AMENDMENT TO H.R. 5116, AMERICA COMPETES REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2010; PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF SENATE AMENDMENTS TO H.R. 2751, FDA FOOD SAFETY MODERNIZATION ACT; AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF SENATE AMENDMENT TO H.R. 2142, GPRA MODERNIZATION ACT OF 2010

Mr. MCGOVERN, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 111-692) on the resolution (H. Res. 1781) providing for consideration of the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 5116) to invest in innovation through research and development, to improve the competitiveness of the United States, and for other purposes; providing for consideration of the Senate amendments to the bill (H.R. 2751) to accelerate motor fuel savings nationwide and provide incentives to registered owners of high polluting automobiles to replace such automobiles with new fuel efficient and less polluting automobiles; and providing for consideration of the Senate amendment to the bill (H.R. 2142) to require quarterly performance assessments of Government programs for purposes of assessing agency performance and improvement, and to establish agency performance improvement officers and the Performance Improvement Council, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

WAIVING REQUIREMENT OF CLAUSE 6(a) OF RULE XIII WITH RESPECT TO CONSIDERATION OF CERTAIN RESOLUTIONS, AND PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF MOTIONS TO SUSPEND THE RULES

Mr. MCGOVERN. Madam Speaker, by direction of the Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 1771 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 1771

Waiving a requirement of clause 6(a) of rule XIII with respect to consideration of certain