

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HEARING

The National Hurricane Research Initiative Act (Legislative Hearing on H.R. 2407)

June 26, 2008

Statement of Subcommittee on Energy & Environment Ranking Member Bob Inglis (SC-4)

Thank you for holding this hearing, Mr. Chairman.

South Carolina is no stranger to hurricanes. I still remember September 1989, when Hurricane Hugo hit the southeastern coastline, causing a total of \$10 billion dollars in damage, taking 82 lives, and leaving 56,000 people homeless. It was the most damaging hurricane ever recorded, and since then, it has only been surpassed by Hurricanes Andrew and Katrina.

In the aftermath of Hugo, Andrew, and Katrina, news stories and government officials emphasized that better preparations could have helped save lives and minimize damages. A year and a half after the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, the National Science Board issued their 2007 Report, "Hurricane Warning: The Critical Need for a National Hurricane Research Initiative," highlighting that while billions were being spend in rescue and relief efforts, there was a serious lack of federal dollars being invested in hurricane-preparedness research.

Today we will discuss a bill that is based on that NSB report. H.R. 2407, *The National Hurricane Research Initiative*, directs the government to make much more significant investments in hurricane-related research across several agencies, including NOAA and NSF. This initiative outlines key investment categories including understanding and prediction, impacts, preparedness, and response.

H.R. 2407 authorizes a large sum of money for this research program (\$4.17 B over ten years). We have an obligation to consider how we can best prepare for hurricanes, but, given our limited resources, we also to need to carefully consider how to best allocate those scarce resources. I'll be looking forward to hearing from our witnesses about what they foresee will be the monetary (and non-monetary) return on this proposed federal investment.

Thank you again Mr. Chairman, and I look forward to hearing from our witnesses on their perspectives of this legislation and any suggestions they may have to improve it.