

Washington, D.C. - U.S. Rep. David Price (D-NC) today announced a \$5 million grant to support the state of North Carolina's efforts to identify potential hazards throughout the state and to mitigate the impacts of natural disasters like hurricanes, flooding, coastal erosion, landslides, tornados, and wildfires. The improved risk assessment techniques will be implemented as a pilot program in Durham, Edgecombe, Macon, and New Hanover Counties and put North Carolina on the cutting edge of natural disaster preparedness.

The grant is administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), under the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Price secured the grant through the fiscal year 2008 Homeland Security Appropriations bill. As Chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security, he authored the House version of the annual funding bill.

"The federal government has a vital role in not only stepping in after disasters strike, but also helping states and localities prepare for those events beforehand and thus mitigate their tragic impact," said Price. "From floods along the coast to landslides in the mountains, North Carolina has experienced more than our fair share of natural disasters. The variety of potential hazards and exemplary emergency management within state government make North Carolina an ideal leader for the rest of the country in preparing for all risks."

The notification released by FEMA is copied below.

STATEWIDE HAZARD MITIGATION PILOT PROGRAM ROLLS OUT IN NORTH CAROLINA

Initiative sets the stage for other jurisdictions across the country

ATLANTA—The North Carolina Division of Emergency Management can incorporate new ways of doing risk assessment for natural disasters thanks to a \$5 million grant from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Starting with four pilot counties, they will expand on ways to identify risk and add it to county and state mitigation planning.

Another \$925,000 in FEMA funding, through its Map Modernization program, was already designated for the project. The state will kick in the balance for the \$9,364,300 project.

"This project gives us a chance to improve how we evaluate risk in a community because we are looking beyond flooding to a number of hazards," said Phil May, FEMA Region IV Regional Administrator. "It will provide a road map for other counties in North Carolina and perhaps across the country to gather this level of detail about homes, businesses and other structures in the community—and how they may be affected by various natural disasters."

The demonstration project will expand the state's floodplain mapping database to include additional natural hazards such as coastal erosion, landslides, tornados, and wildfires. Project staff will gather information such as a building's footprint, its first-floor elevation, and the kind of construction materials used. The data will help identify the extent and probability of damage to buildings in a community should a natural disaster of any kind occur.

The grant includes the development of tools that automatically generate risk assessment information that can be included in state and local hazard mitigation plans. Local emergency managers also can use these tools to communicate information about the probability and the potential consequences of natural disasters that might occur in their area. Risk assessments are an integral part of hazard mitigation planning and disaster preparedness activities.

The tools will be used in four pilot counties (Durham, Edgecombe, Macon and New Hanover) to update the risk assessment portions of their local multi-hazard mitigation plans.

FEMA's Pre-Disaster Mitigation (PDM) program, through which the \$5 million grant was awarded, provides funds to states, territories, Indian tribal governments, communities, and universities for hazard mitigation planning and the implementation of mitigation projects prior to a disaster event.

Funding is intended to reduce the risk to the population, while also reducing reliance on funding from actual disaster declarations. PDM grants are awarded on a competitive basis and without reference to state allocations, quotas, or other formula-based allocation of funds.

FEMA leads and supports the nation in a risk-based, comprehensive emergency management system of preparedness, protection, response, recovery, and mitigation, to reduce the loss of life and property and protect the nation from all hazards including natural disasters, acts of terrorism, and other man-made disasters.

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