



FEMA

W-08029

May 5, 2008

MEMORANDUM FOR: Write Your Own (WYO) Principal Coordinators and
NFIP Servicing Agent

FROM: WYO Clearinghouse

SUBJECT: Congressional Hearing Testimony, April 30, 2008

David I. Maurstad, FEMA Assistant Administrator for Mitigation and Federal Insurance Administrator, presented testimony before Congress last week concerning the reauthorization of FEMA's Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program.

The attached article highlights Mr. Maurstad's testimony before the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management.

Please share this information with others in your organization, as appropriate.

cc: Vendors, IBHS, FIPNC, Government Technical Representative

Suggested Routing: Marketing, Underwriting

Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grants Save Lives and Money, Maurstad Tells Congress

Assistant Administrator for Mitigation and Federal Insurance Administrator David Maurstad told Congress that FEMA's Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program (PDM) is a success and should be reauthorized.

In testimony April 30 before the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management, Maurstad said the grant program "has become an integral part of FEMA's mitigation strategy by providing grants to states, territories, tribal governments, and communities so they can develop mitigation plans and implement mitigation activities before hazards strike."



Without reauthorization, the grant program will expire September 30, 2008.

Maurstad gave some examples of mitigation's value. He said a 2005 congressionally mandated study by the Multi-hazard Mitigation Council (an advisory body of the National Institute of Building Sciences) concluded that cost-effective mitigation saves an average of four dollars for every dollar spent, with flood mitigation yielding even greater savings.

He also cited success stories illustrating how states and communities have benefited from both types of mitigation assistance. In Rutherford County, Tenn., for example, state and local officials used PDM funds to acquire a flood-prone home from a family who bought the home from sellers who hid its flood history. Rutherford County officials demolished the damaged structure and returned the property to open space, thus eliminating a persistent flood-risk.

In Broward County, Florida, five fire stations were fitted with PDM-funded, roll-down storm shutter systems. When Hurricane Wilma struck Florida, the retrofitted fire stations emerged unscathed and were able to effectively operate before, during and after the storm.

"Community-level mitigation planning and activities save lives, reduce property damage, direct response and recovery efforts to where they are needed most, decrease reliance on federal disaster funds and reduce the financial impact of disasters on the communities they strike, as well as the nation," Maurstad told Congress. "Reauthorizing PDM for five more years will assure a stable and dependable source of mitigation funding, and will promote consistent community efforts to pursue mitigation planning and activities that reduce vulnerability."