

Rep. Matsui Sends Sympathy to Southern California Highlights Need for Increased Emergency Preparedness

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Washington, D.C. - Today, in response to the rampant wildfires raging across Southern California, Rep. Doris Matsui (CA-05) expressed her concern for the hundreds of thousands of displaced citizens and pointed to the need for increased emergency preparedness.

"My heart goes out to the hundreds of thousands of California residents who have been affected by this week's wildfires. We must take proactive measures to help assuage some of the results of such unforeseeable natural disasters," said Matsui.

"In Congress, we are taking steps to lay the groundwork for more stable, secure communities across the country. In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, the collapse of the Minneapolis bridge, and now the wildfires in California, it is clear that we must make investments in our structures, buildings, and communities to help mitigate the effects of disasters," said Matsui.

This week, Congresswoman Matsui introduced the Safe Building Codes Act of 2007 to improve the levels of emergency preparedness in California and across the nation. The legislation creates incentives for states to adopt and enforce high building safety standards, helping to protect communities in the event a natural disaster strikes. States that enact comprehensive building codes would qualify for additional disaster relief funding. States that have a mandatory statewide building code and have enforcement measures in place would be eligible for an additional four percent of federal disaster relief funds.

Additionally, this legislation will enable states to utilize existing pre-disaster mitigation grants to establish and administer building code programs prior to the occurrence of a disaster. Stronger, more modern building codes will make buildings more likely to withstand fires, earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes, and floods, helping them to remain intact in the event of a disaster. The proactive action taken by this legislation aims to reduce the amount of taxpayer dollars spent on recovery efforts.

“Unfortunately, calamities and natural disasters will always occur. We must make investments in our homes, businesses and communities to make sure they can withstand natural disasters,” said Rep. Matsui.

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