To establish a National Flood Research and Education Center to provide research, data, and recommendations on physical science, social science, economic analysis, policy analysis, risk analysis, monitoring, predicting, and planning as they relate to flooding and flood related issues.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

AUGUST 2, 2013

Mr. LOEBSECK (for himself, Mr. BRALEY of Iowa, Mr. COOPER, Mr. ANDREWS, and Mr. ISRAEL) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, and in addition to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To establish a National Flood Research and Education Center to provide research, data, and recommendations on physical science, social science, economic analysis, policy analysis, risk analysis, monitoring, predicting, and planning as they relate to flooding and flood related issues.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “National Flood Research and Education Center Act”.


SEC. 2. NATIONAL FLOOD RESEARCH AND EDUCATION CENTER ESTABLISHMENT AND PURPOSE.

(a) Establishment.—There is established within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration a National Flood Research and Education Center (in this Act referred to as “NFREC”) which shall consist of—

(1) an office within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration;

(2) one public university or college selected by the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (in this Act referred to as the “Administrator”), which shall serve as the lead partner institution with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; and

(3) a consortium of other public universities or colleges selected by the Administrator and the lead partner institution based on their ability to fulfill specific purposes of NFREC.

(b) Purposes.—The purposes of NFREC are as follows:

(1) To plan, conduct, and arrange for competent public research, data, education, and recommendations within the following categories as they relate to flooding issues nationwide, regionally, and locally:
(A) Physical sciences, including engineering, hydrology, environmental, and atmospheric sciences, of flooding and flood-related events.

(B) Social science of flooding and flood-related events focused on increasing community resilience.

(C) Economic analysis of flooding and flood-related events in addition to analysis of a variety of existing and new strategies and techniques to reduce, manage, and prevent flooding and flood-related events.

(D) Policy analysis and recommendations on flooding-related policy on a Federal, State, and local governmental basis.

(E) Risk analysis and risk management of flooding and flood-related events.

(F) Improvement of existing, and testing of new, risk assessment tools, methods, and models for flooding and flood risks used by Federal, State, and local governments and other interested organizations.

(G) Improvement of existing, and testing of new, monitoring and predicting strategies and techniques of flooding and flood-related events.
(H) Improvement of existing, and testing
of new, flood management and prevention strat-
egies and techniques.

(2) To carry out this Act within a variety of re-
gions in the United States which are identified and
categorized by NFREC based on their specific flood-
ing and flood-related issues, hydrology, weather, and
related issues so that diverse flood situations are
represented and examined through NFREC’s work.

(3) To identify opportunities for increased effi-
ciency in allocation of resources, coordination, co-
operation, and consolidation of efforts as they relate
to local, Statewide, regional, and Federal flood-re-
lated efforts with respect to NFREC’s purposes.

(4) To develop or improve undergraduate and
graduate degree programs and other programs at
the consortium-member public universities and col-
leges to advance the entry of new talent into flood-
ing-related fields.

(5) To collaborate with other colleges and uni-
versities in the region that have demonstrated capa-
bility for research, information dissemination, and
graduate training in order to develop regional net-
works that are knowledgeable on regional flooding
issues.
SEC. 3. CONSORTIUM SELECTION AND COLLABORATION.

(a) Selection of the Lead Partner Institution.—The Administrator, within 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, shall select the lead partner institution described in section 2(a)(2). The Administrator shall select a public university or college which—

(1) has demonstrated and proven expertise in physical and environmental science, flooding, hydraulic research, hydroscience, engineering, and meteorological issues;

(2) is located in a State which frequently experiences inland flooding;

(3) has previously partnered with, or received funds from, Federal and international agencies for flooding, hydrology, and watershed issues, including the Army Corps of Engineers, the United States Geological Survey, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Department of Agriculture, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the National Science Foundation, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization;

(4) has the capacity to develop and submit a plan on how it will operate as the lead partner institution, the type of research, activities, and collabora-
tion it would undertake, and how it would incor-
porate its previous work on issues related to the pur-
poses of NFREC into its new mission as the lead
partner institution;

(5) can demonstrate an ability to take the lead-
ing role of coordinating and fulfilling the purposes of
NFREC;

(6) can demonstrate an ability to provide tech-

nical assistance and demonstration project manage-
ment and oversight both of grantees demonstration
projects and of demonstration projects initiated
through consortium members;

(7) can demonstrate an ability to incorporate
NFREC work into undergraduate and graduate edu-
cational programs within the public university or col-
lege; and

(8) can demonstrate an ability to contribute the
required non-Federal matching funding to maintain
a lead partner institution center.

(b) SELECTION OF CONSORTIUM MEMBERS.—The

Administrator, in partnership with the lead partner insti-
tution, shall select, within 90 days after the selection of
the lead partner institution, additional universities and
colleges to participate in a consortium through criteria as
determined by the Administrator and the lead partner in-
stitution which shall, among other criteria determined by
the Administrator and lead partner institution, prioritize
institutions that—

(1) have a focus or expertise in at least one of
the categories described in section 2(b)(1);

(2) have the ability to plan, conduct, and ar-
range for competent public research, data, edu-
cation, and recommendations as they relate to flood-
ing in diverse regions of the United States identified
and in the categories described in section 2(b)(1)
and meet the purposes of NFREC;

(3) can demonstrate an ability to provide tech-
nical assistance and demonstration project manage-
ment and oversight;

(4) can demonstrate an ability to incorporate
NFREC work in to into undergraduate and gradu-
ate educational programs within the university or
college; and

(5) can demonstrate an ability to contribute the
required non-Federal matching funding to maintain
a consortium member center.

(c) CONSORTIUM PARTNERSHIPS.—The member in-
stitutions of NFREC shall partner for the purposes of this
Act in the following ways:
(1) NOAA PARTNERSHIP.—The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration shall partner directly with the lead partner institution for the purposes of NFREC.

(2) LEAD PARTNER INSTITUTION PARTNERSHIP.—The lead partner institution shall partner directly with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the consortium members for the purposes of NFREC.

(3) CONSORTIUM MEMBER PARTNERSHIP.—The consortium members shall partner with the lead partner institution for the purposes of NFREC.

SEC. 4. PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION WITH FEDERAL, REGIONAL, STATE, AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND ORGANIZATIONS.

(a) PARTNERSHIPS.—NFREC shall partner with the United States Geological Survey and the Army Corps of Engineers for the purposes of this Act.

(b) COLLABORATION.—NFREC shall—

(1) collaborate on Federal flood-related issues with Federal agencies such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the National Science Foundation, and the Department of Agriculture;
(2) collaborate and share best practices on regional, State, and locally specific flooding and flood-related issues with—

(A) State, county, and local governments;

(B) local councils of governments or regional planning organizations;

(C) State agriculture, natural resource, environment, economic development, and water agencies;

(D) floodplain managers;

(E) State Homeland Security personnel, county disaster recovery coordinators, emergency management personnel, and first responders;

(F) resource conservation and development councils;

(G) watershed organizations and boards;

(H) agriculture and commodity organizations and farmers;

(I) environmental organizations; and

(J) business and development organizations; and

(3) explore opportunities to collaborate, when appropriate, on Federal flood-related issues with other Federal agencies such as the Bureau of Rec-
lamation, the Tennessee Valley Authority, the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Public Health Administration, the National Science Foundation, the Department of Defense, the Department of the Interior, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and various national laboratories.

SEC. 5. INFORMATION COLLECTION AND DISSEMINATION.

(a) NOAA.—

(1) ANNUAL REPORT.—The Administrator shall publish annually a report containing the activities, partnerships and collaborations, Federal policy recommendations, previous and continuing budgets, findings, and any other applicable information from the consortium members, and shall provide each report to Congress and the President and make it available to the public in an easily accessible electronic format on the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s website.

(2) REVIEW OF REPORTS FROM CONSORTIUM MEMBERS.—The Administrator shall review the reports from the consortium members to ensure that funds are being spent properly according to the purposes of this Act and that the consortium members are producing competent public research, data, edu-
cation, and recommendations in regard to flooding
and flood-related issues.

(3) **Review of consortium operations.**—
The Administrator shall periodically review the oper-
ation of consortium members to ensure that funds
are being spent properly according to the purposes
of this Act and that the consortium members are
producing competent public research, data, edu-
cation, and recommendations in regard to flooding
and flood-related issues.

(b) **Lead Partner Institution.**—

(1) **Compilation of annual consortium
member reports.**—The lead partner institution
shall compile annually reports from consortium
members, along with its own report, containing the
activities, partnerships and collaborations, Federal
policy recommendations, previous and continuing
budgets, findings, and any other applicable informa-
tion from consortium members, and shall provide
this information to the Administrator annually by a
date determined by the Administrator.

(2) **Annual lead partner institution re-
port.**—In addition, the lead partner institution
shall publish annually a report specific to its activi-
ties, partnerships and collaborations, State and local
policy recommendations, previous and continuing budgets, findings, and other applicable information by a date determined by the Administrator which shall also be made available to the public in an easily accessible electronic format on the lead partner institution’s website.

(c) Consortium Members.—The consortium members shall each publish annually a report containing the activities, partnerships and collaborations, State and local policy recommendations, previous and continuing budgets, findings, and other applicable information by a date determined by the lead partner institution which shall also be made available to the public in an easily accessible electronic format on the consortium members’ websites.

(d) National Flood Research and Education Center Website.—NFREC shall establish a website which shall contain at least the following information:

(1) Key findings and best practices.

(2) Collaborations and partnerships.

(3) Annual reports and other pertinent information on its purposes.

(4) The location and contact information for the consortium members.

(5) Federal, State, local, and regionally specific public research, data, education, and policy rec-
ommendations which shall be updated in a timely manner with new information.

(6) The variety of regions in the United States which are identified and categorized by NFREC, based on their specific flooding and flood-related issues, hydrology, weather, and related issues.

(7) Approved demonstration projects and their progress in addition to information on applying for demonstration project assistance.

(8) Tools for monitoring, predicting, and modeling flooding as they become available.

SEC. 6. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS.

(a) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS.—NFREC may provide technical assistance and demonstration project grant assistance to eligible entities on a competitive basis to assist with implementing recommendations of NFREC or testing new or improved strategies or technologies for the categories described in section 2(b)(1).

(b) ELIGIBLE ENTITIES.—The following are eligible entities for purposes of this section:

(1) State governments.

(2) County governments.

(3) Local governments.
(c) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—Consortium members may provide technical assistance at their discretion to eligible entities that have limited capacity for developing an application for demonstration project grants. Consortium members may also provide technical assistance at their discretion in implementing demonstration projects approved by the Administrator.

(d) COMPETITIVE CRITERIA.—The Administrator, in partnership with the lead partner institution, shall develop criteria required for submitting a competitive demonstration project grant application and for the approval of such an application.

(e) ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES.—Grantees may use funds only for flooding-related projects which implement recommendations of NFREC or for testing of—

(1) improved existing and or new risk analysis and risk management of flooding and flood-related events;

(2) improved existing and or new risk assessment tools, methods, and models for flooding and flood risks used by Federal, State, and local governments and other interested organizations;

(3) improved existing and or new monitoring and predicting strategies and techniques of flooding and flood related events; or
(4) improved existing and or new flood manage-
ment and prevention strategies and techniques.

(f) **Subcontracting.**—Eligible entities may sub-
contract a portion of grant funds received for necessary
construction-related costs to pursue an eligible activity.

(g) **Applications.**—

(1) **Consortium review and approval.**—
Within 60 days of receiving a completed application,
the consortium member in whose region the project
will take place and the lead partner institution shall
review and approve or disapprove the application.

(2) **Administrator approval.**—Within 30
days of receiving an application that has been ap-
proved by the applicable consortium members, the
Administrator shall determine whether to provide
the project final approval.

(h) **Grant Size.**—

(1) **In general.**—Demonstration project grant
awards under this section shall not exceed $250,000
per project.

(2) **Waiver of grant size limitation.**—The
Administrator may waive such grant size limitation
if—

(A) all consortium members approve of
such a waiver;
(B) the eligible entity has the expertise, or
will work with partners that have the expertise,
to manage the proposed project; and

(C) the eligible entity can show that a
project involves multiple watersheds or jurisdic-
tions, benefits multiple communities, has broad
community support, and incorporates multiple
aspects of NFREC’s work in the project.

(i) Matching Funds.—Entities receiving a dem-
onstration project grant under this section shall be re-
quired to provide a 30 percent non-Federal cost share.

(j) Total Demonstration Project Grant
Amount Available.—There shall be not more than
$2,000,000 available annually for demonstration project
grants under this section nationwide.

(k) Monitoring and Reporting.—For a dem-
onstration project that receives a grant under this section,
the applicable regional consortium member shall monitor
the effectiveness, efficiency, and progress of the project
and report on these factors and their involvement periodi-
cally to the lead partner institution. The applicable re-
gional consortium member shall make this information
available through its website and additionally provide this
information in its annual reports.
SEC. 7. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—For each of the fiscal years 2014 through 2019, there are authorized for NFREC, $10,000,000, of which—

(1) not more than $2,000,000 each fiscal year shall be for the operation of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s center; and

(2) not more than $3,000,000 each fiscal year shall be for the operation of the lead partner institution’s center, matched by a 20 percent non-Federal cost share.

(b) ADDITIONAL AUTHORIZATION.—

(1) LEAD PARTNER INSTITUTION.—There are authorized such sums as may be necessary for the lead partner institution to improve its facilities to a level that meets the requirements of the role of lead partner institution.

(2) PLAN.—Before the lead partner institution receives any funding under this subsection, a plan detailing what type of facility construction or improvements will take place must first be approved by the Administrator. Such plan shall include any land acquisition, engineering, design, and staffing and equipment needs, in addition to other information as required by the Administrator.
(3) Non-Federal cost share.—There shall be a non-Federal cost share of 20 percent for facility improvement or construction projects pursued by the lead partner institution.

(4) Wage rate requirements.—Any authorized and funded construction activity shall meet Federal prevailing wage requirements as determined by the Secretary of Labor in accordance with subchapter IV of chapter 31 of part A of subtitle II of title 40, United States Code (commonly referred to as the “Davis-Bacon Act”).

(c) Consortium Member Centers.—

(1) In general.—Not more than $3,000,000 each fiscal year shall be for the operation of all consortium members’ centers, matched by a 20 percent non-Federal cost share.

(2) Limitation.—Any one consortium member shall not receive more than $500,000 in Federal funds in one fiscal year.

(d) Grants.—Not more than $2,000,000 each fiscal year shall be made available for demonstration project grants nationwide.