

TSUNAMI WARNING, EDUCATION,
AND RESEARCH ACT OF 2014

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5309) to authorize and strengthen the tsunami detection, forecast, warning, research, and mitigation program of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5309

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 “Tsunami Warning, Education, and Research Act of 2014”.

SEC. 2. REFERENCES TO THE TSUNAMI WARNING AND EDUCATION ACT.

Except as otherwise expressly provided, whenever in this Act an amendment or repeal is expressed in terms of an amendment to, or repeal of, a section or other provision, the reference shall be considered to be made to a section or other provision of the Tsunami Warning and Education Act (33 U.S.C. 3201 et seq.).

SEC. 3. EXPANSION OF PURPOSES OF TSUNAMI WARNING AND EDUCATION ACT.

Section 3 (33 U.S.C. 3202) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by inserting “research,” after “warnings.”;

(2) by amending paragraph (2) to read as follows:

“(2) to enhance and modernize the existing United States Tsunami Warning System to increase the accuracy of forecasts and warnings, to maintain full coverage of tsunami detection assets, and to reduce false alarms.”;

(3) by amending paragraph (3) to read as follows:

“(3) to improve and develop standards and guidelines for mapping, modeling, and assessment efforts to improve tsunami detection, forecasting, warnings, notification, mitigation, resiliency, response, outreach, and recovery.”;

(4) by redesignating paragraphs (4), (5), and (6) as paragraphs (5), (6), and (8), respectively;

(5) by inserting after paragraph (3) the following:

“(4) to improve research efforts related to improving tsunami detection, forecasting, warnings, notification, mitigation, resiliency, response, outreach, and recovery.”;

(6) in paragraph (5), as so redesignated—

(A) by striking “and increase” and inserting “, increase, and develop uniform standards and guidelines for”;

(B) by inserting “, including the warning signs of locally generated tsunami” after “approaching”;

(7) in paragraph (6), as so redesignated, by striking “, including the Indian Ocean; and” and inserting a semicolon; and

(8) by inserting after paragraph (6), as so redesignated, the following:

“(7) to foster resilient communities in the face of tsunami and other coastal hazards; and”.

SEC. 4. MODIFICATION OF TSUNAMI FORECASTING AND WARNING PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Subsection (a) of section 4 (33 U.S.C. 3203) is amended by striking “Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean Sea, and Gulf of Mexico region” and inserting “Atlantic Ocean region, including the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico”.

(b) COMPONENTS.—Subsection (b) of such section 4 is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1), by striking “established” and inserting “supported or maintained”;

(2) in paragraph (4), by inserting “and safeguarding port and harbor operations” after “communities”;

(3) in paragraph (7)—

(A) by inserting “, including graphical warning products,” after “warnings”;

(B) by inserting “, territories,” after “States”; and

(C) by inserting “and Wireless Emergency Alerts” after “Hazards Program”; and

(4) in paragraph (8), by inserting “and commercial and Federal undersea communications cables” after “observing technologies”.

(c) TSUNAMI WARNING SYSTEM.—Subsection (c) of such section 4 is amended to read as follows:

“(c) TSUNAMI WARNING SYSTEM.—The program under this section shall operate a tsunami warning system that—

“(1) is capable of forecasting tsunami, including forecasting tsunami arrival time and inundation estimates, anywhere in the Pacific and Arctic Ocean regions and providing adequate warnings;

“(2) is capable of forecasting and providing adequate warnings in areas of the Atlantic Ocean, including the Caribbean Sea and Gulf of Mexico, that are determined—

“(A) to be geologically active, or to have significant potential for geological activity; and

“(B) to pose significant risks of tsunami for States along the coastal areas of the Atlantic Ocean, Caribbean Sea, or Gulf of Mexico; and

“(3) supports other international tsunami forecasting and warning efforts.”.

(d) TSUNAMI WARNING CENTERS.—Subsection (d) of such section 4 is amended to read as follows:

“(d) TSUNAMI WARNING CENTERS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall support or maintain centers, as part of the National Centers for Environmental Prediction, to support the tsunami warning system required by subsection (c). The Centers shall include—

“(A) the National Tsunami Warning Center, located in Alaska, which is primarily responsible for Alaska, the continental United States, and the Caribbean;

“(B) the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center, located in Hawaii, which is primarily responsible for Hawaii and other areas of the Pacific not covered by the National Center; and

“(C) any additional forecast and warning centers determined by the National Weather Service to be necessary.

(2) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The responsibilities of the centers supported or maintained pursuant to paragraph (1) shall include the following:

“(A) Continuously monitoring data from seismological, deep ocean, coastal sea level, and tidal monitoring stations and other data sources as may be developed and deployed.

“(B) Evaluating earthquakes, landslides, and volcanic eruptions that have the potential to generate tsunami.

“(C) Evaluating deep ocean buoy data and tidal monitoring stations for indications of tsunami resulting from earthquakes and other sources.

“(D) To the extent practicable, utilizing a range of models to predict tsunami arrival times and flooding estimates.

“(E) Disseminating forecasts and tsunami warning bulletins to Federal, State, and local government officials and the public.

“(F) Coordinating with the tsunami hazard mitigation program conducted under section 5 to ensure ongoing sharing of information between forecasters and emergency management officials.

“(G) Making data gathered under this Act and post-warning analyses conducted by the National Weather Service or other relevant Administration offices available to researchers.

“(3) FAIL-SAFE WARNING CAPABILITY.—The tsunami warning centers supported or maintained pursuant to paragraph (1) shall maintain a fail-safe warning capability and ability to perform back-up duties for each other.

“(4) COORDINATION WITH NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE.—The National Weather Service shall coordinate with the centers supported or maintained pursuant to paragraph (1) to ensure that regional and local forecast offices—

“(A) have the technical knowledge and capability to disseminate tsunami warnings for the communities they serve; and

“(B) leverage connections with local emergency management officials for optimally disseminating tsunami warnings and forecasts.

“(5) UNIFORM OPERATING PROCEDURES.—The Administrator shall—

“(A) develop uniform operational procedures for the centers supported or maintained pursuant to paragraph (1), including the use of software applications, checklists, decision support tools, and tsunami warning products that have been standardized across the program supported under this section;

“(B) ensure that processes and products of the warning system operated pursuant to subsection (c)—

“(i) reflect industry best practices;

“(ii) conform to the maximum extent practicable with internationally recognized standards for information technology; and

“(iii) conform to the maximum extent practicable with other warning products and practices of the National Weather Service;

“(C) ensure that future adjustments to operational protocols, processes, and warning products—

“(i) are made consistently across the warning system operated pursuant to subsection (c); and

“(ii) are applied in a uniform manner across such warning system; and

“(D) disseminate guidelines and metrics for evaluating and improving tsunami forecast models.

(6) AVAILABLE RESOURCES.—The Administrator, through the National Weather Service, shall ensure that resources are available to fulfill the obligations of this Act. This includes ensuring supercomputing resources are available to run such computer models as are needed for purposes of the tsunami warning system operated pursuant to subsection (c).”.

(e) TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY; MAINTENANCE AND UPGRADES.—Subsection (e) of such section 4 is amended to read as follows:

“(e) TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY; MAINTENANCE AND UPGRADES.—In carrying out this section, the Administrator shall—

“(1) develop requirements for the equipment used to forecast tsunami, including—

“(A) provisions for multipurpose detection platforms;

“(B) reliability and performance metrics; and

“(C) to the maximum extent practicable, requirements for the integration of equipment with other United States and global ocean and coastal observation systems, the global Earth observing system of systems, the global seismic networks, and the Advanced National Seismic System;

“(2) develop and execute a plan for the transfer of technology from ongoing research conducted as part of the program supported or maintained under section 6 into the program under this section; and

“(3) ensure that the Administration’s operational tsunami detection equipment is properly maintained.”

(f) FEDERAL COOPERATION.—Subsection (f) of such section 4 is amended to read as follows:

“(f) FEDERAL COOPERATION.—When deploying and maintaining tsunami detection technologies under the program under this section, the Administrator shall—

“(1) identify which assets of other Federal agencies are necessary to support such program; and

“(2) work with each agency identified under paragraph (1)—

“(A) to acquire the agency’s assistance; and

“(B) to prioritize the necessary assets.”

(g) UNNECESSARY PROVISIONS.—Such section 4 is further amended by striking subsections (g) through (k).

SEC. 5. MODIFICATION OF NATIONAL TSUNAMI HAZARD MITIGATION PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 5 (33 U.S.C. 3204) is amended by striking subsections (a) through (d) and inserting the following:

“(a) PROGRAM REQUIRED.—The Administrator, in consultation with the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the heads of such other agencies as the Administrator considers relevant, shall conduct a community-based tsunami hazard mitigation program to improve tsunami preparedness and resiliency of at-risk areas in the United States and the territories of the United States.

“(b) PROGRAM COMPONENTS.—The Program conducted pursuant to subsection (a) shall include the following:

“(1) Technical and financial assistance to coastal States, territories, tribes, and local governments to develop and implement activities under this section.

“(2) Integration of tsunami preparedness and mitigation programs into ongoing State-based hazard warning, resilience planning, and risk management activities, including predisaster planning, emergency response, evacuation planning, disaster recovery, hazard mitigation, and community development and redevelopment programs in affected areas.

“(3) Activities to promote the adoption of tsunami resilience, preparedness, warning, and mitigation measures by Federal, State, territorial, tribal, and local governments and nongovernmental entities, including educational and risk communication programs to discourage development in high-risk areas.

“(4) Activities to support the development of regional tsunami hazard and risk assessments, using inundation models that meet programmatic standards for accuracy. Such regional risk assessments may include the following:

“(A) The sources, sizes, and histories of tsunami in that region.

“(B) Inundation models and maps of critical infrastructure and socioeconomic vulnerability in areas subject to tsunami inundation.

“(C) Maps of evacuation areas and evacuation routes.

“(D) Evaluations of the size of populations that will require evacuation, including populations with special evacuation needs.

“(5) Activities to support the development of community-based outreach and education programs to ensure community readiness and resilience, including the following:

“(A) The development, implementation, and assessment of technical training and public education programs, including education programs that address unique characteristics of distant and near-field tsunamis.

“(B) The development of decision support tools.

“(C) The incorporation of social science research into community readiness and resilience efforts.

“(D) The development of evidence-based education guidelines.

“(6) Dissemination of guidelines and standards for community planning, education, and training products, programs, and tools, including standards for—

“(A) mapping products;

“(B) inundation models; and

“(C) effective emergency exercises.

“(c) AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES.—In addition to activities conducted under subsection (b), the program conducted pursuant to subsection (a) may include the following:

“(1) Multidisciplinary vulnerability assessment research, education, and training to help integrate risk management and resilience objectives with community development planning and policies.

“(2) Risk management training for local officials and community organizations to enhance understanding and preparedness.

“(3) Development of practical applications for existing or emerging technologies, such as modeling, remote sensing, geospatial technology, engineering, and observing systems.

“(4) Risk management, risk assessment, and resilience data and information services, including—

“(A) access to data and products derived from observing and detection systems; and

“(B) development and maintenance of new integrated data products to support risk management, risk assessment, and resilience programs.

“(5) Risk notification systems that coordinate with and build upon existing systems and actively engage decisionmakers, local and State government agencies, business communities, nongovernmental organizations, and the media.

“(d) NO PREEMPTION.—

“(1) DESIGNATION OF AT-RISK AREAS.—The establishment of national standards for inundation models under this section shall not prevent States, territories, tribes, and local governments from designating additional areas as being at risk based on knowledge of local conditions.

“(2) NO NEW REGULATORY AUTHORITY.—Nothing in this Act may be construed as establishing new regulatory authority for any Federal agency.”

(b) REPORT ON ACCREDITATION OF TSUNAMI-READY PROGRAM.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration shall submit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate and the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives a report on which authorities and activities would be needed to have the TsunamiReady program of the National Weather Service accredited by the Emergency Management Accreditation Program.

SEC. 6. MODIFICATION OF TSUNAMI RESEARCH PROGRAM.

Section 6 (33 U.S.C. 3205) is amended—

(1) in the matter before paragraph (1), by striking “The Administrator shall” and all that follows through “establish or maintain” and inserting the following:

“(a) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall, in consultation with such other Federal agencies, State and territorial governments, and academic institutions as the Administrator considers appropriate, the coordinating committee under section 11(b), and the panel under section 8(a), support or maintain”;

(2) by striking “and assessment for tsunami tracking and numerical forecast modeling. Such research program shall—” and

inserting the following: “assessment for tsunami tracking and numerical forecast modeling, and standards development.

“(b) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The research program supported or maintained pursuant to subsection (a) shall—”;

(3) in subsection (b), as designated by paragraph (2)—

(A) by amending paragraph (1) to read as follows:

“(1) consider other appropriate research to mitigate the impact of tsunami, including the improvement of near-field tsunami detection and forecasting capabilities, which may include use of new generation Deep-ocean Assessment and Reporting of Tsunamis and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration supercomputer capacity to develop a rapid tsunami forecast for all United States coastlines”;

(B) in paragraph (3)—

(i) by striking “include” and inserting “conduct”;

(ii) by striking “and” at the end;

(C) by redesignating paragraph (4) as paragraph (5); and

(D) by inserting after paragraph (3) the following:

“(4) develop the technical basis for validation of tsunami maps, numerical tsunami models, digital elevation models, and forecasts; and”;

(4) by adding at the end the following:

“(c) PILOT PROJECT.—The Administrator may, pursuant to subsection (b), develop a pilot project for near-field tsunami forecast development for the Cascadia region along the west coast of the United States using new generation Deep-ocean Assessment and Reporting of Tsunamis, upcoming and existing cable networks, and new National Centers for Environmental Protection modeling capability.”

SEC. 7. GLOBAL TSUNAMI WARNING AND MITIGATION NETWORK.

Section 7 (33 U.S.C. 3206) is amended—

(1) by amending subsection (a) to read as follows:

“(a) SUPPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT OF INTERNATIONAL TSUNAMI WARNING SYSTEM.—The Administrator shall, in coordination with the Secretary of State and in consultation with such other agencies as the Administrator considers relevant, provide technical assistance and training to the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, the World Meteorological Organization of the United Nations, and such other international entities as the Administrator considers appropriate, as part of the international efforts to develop a fully functional global tsunami forecast and warning system comprised of regional tsunami warning networks.”;

(2) in subsection (b), by striking “shall” and inserting “may”; and

(3) in subsection (c)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking “establishing” and inserting “supporting”; and

(B) in paragraph (2)—

(i) by striking “establish” and inserting “support”; and

(ii) by striking “establishing” and inserting “supporting”.

SEC. 8. TSUNAMI SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ADVISORY PANEL.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Act is further amended—

(1) by redesignating section 8 (33 U.S.C. 3207) as section 9; and

(2) by inserting after section 7 (33 U.S.C. 3206) the following:

“SEC. 8. TSUNAMI SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ADVISORY PANEL.

“(a) DESIGNATION.—The Administrator shall designate the Ocean Exploration Advisory Working Group within the Science Advisory Board of the Administration to serve

as the Tsunami Science and Technology Advisory Panel to provide advice to the Administrator on matters regarding tsunami science, technology, and regional preparedness.

“(b) MEMBERSHIP.—

“(1) COMPOSITION.—The working group designated under subsection (a) shall be composed of no fewer than 7 members selected by the Administrator from among individuals from academia or State agencies who have academic or practical expertise in physical sciences, social sciences, information technology, coastal resilience, emergency management, or such other disciplines as the Administrator considers appropriate.

“(2) FEDERAL EMPLOYMENT.—No member of the working group designated pursuant to subsection (a) may be a Federal employee.

“(c) RESPONSIBILITIES.—Not less frequently than once every 4 years, the working group designated under subsection (a) shall—

“(1) review the activities of the Administration, and other Federal activities as appropriate, relating to tsunami research, detection, forecasting, warning, mitigation, resiliency, and preparation; and

“(2) submit to the Administrator and such others as the Administrator considers appropriate—

“(A) the findings of the working group with respect to the most recent review conducted pursuant to paragraph (1); and

“(B) such recommendations for legislative or administrative action as the working group considers appropriate to improve Federal tsunami research, detection, forecasting, warning, mitigation, resiliency, and preparation.

“(d) REPORTS TO CONGRESS.—Not less frequently than once every 4 years, the Administrator shall submit to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate, and the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives a report on the findings and recommendations received by the Administrator under subsection (c)(2).”

SEC. 9. REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF TSUNAMI WARNING AND EDUCATION ACT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall submit to Congress a report on the implementation of the Tsunami Warning and Education Act (33 U.S.C. 3201 et seq.).

(b) ELEMENTS.—The report required by subsection (a) shall include the following:

(1) A detailed description of the progress made in implementing sections 4(d)(6), 5(b)(6), and 6(b)(4) of the Tsunami Warning and Education Act.

(2) A description of the ways that tsunami warnings and warning products issued by the Tsunami Forecasting and Warning Program established under section 4 of the Tsunami Warning and Education Act (33 U.S.C. 3203) can be standardized and streamlined with warnings and warning products for hurricanes, coastal storms, and other coastal flooding events.

SEC. 10. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

Section 9 of the Act, as redesignated by section 8(a)(1) of this Act, is amended to read as follows:

“SEC. 9. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

“There are authorized to be appropriated to the Administrator to carry out this Act \$27,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2015 through 2017, of which—

“(1) not less than 27 percent of the amount appropriated for each fiscal year shall be for activities under the National Tsunami Hazard Mitigation Program under section 5; and

“(2) not less than 8 percent of the amount appropriated for each fiscal year shall be for the Tsunami Research Program under section 6.”

SEC. 11. OUTREACH RESPONSIBILITIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Adminis-

tration, in coordination with State and local emergency managers, shall develop and carry out formal outreach activities to improve tsunami education and awareness and foster the development of resilient communities. Outreach activities may include—

(1) the development of outreach plans to ensure the close integration of tsunami warning centers supported or maintained pursuant to section 4(d) of the Tsunami Warning and Education Act (33 U.S.C. 3203(d)) with local Weather Forecast Offices of the National Weather Service and emergency managers;

(2) working with appropriate local Weather Forecast Offices to ensure they have the technical knowledge and capability to disseminate tsunami warnings to the communities they serve; and

(3) evaluating the effectiveness of warnings and of coordination with local Weather Forecast Offices after significant tsunami events.

(b) COORDINATING COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL TSUNAMI HAZARD MITIGATION PROGRAM.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall convene a coordinating committee to assist the Administrator in the conduct of the program required by section 5(a) of the Tsunami Warning and Education Act (33 U.S.C. 3204(a)).

(2) COMPOSITION.—The coordinating committee shall be composed of members from each of the States at risk from tsunami, and any other such representatives as the Administrator considers appropriate to represent Federal, State, tribal, territorial, and local governments.

(3) SUBCOMMITTEES.—The Administrator may approve the formation of subcommittees to address specific program components or regional issues.

(4) RESPONSIBILITIES.—The coordinating committee shall—

(A) provide feedback on how funds should be prioritized to carry out the program required by section 5(a) of the Tsunami Warning and Education Act (33 U.S.C. 3204(a));

(B) ensure that areas described in section 4(c) of the Tsunami Warning and Education Act (33 U.S.C. 3203(c)) in the United States and its territories have the opportunity to participate in the program;

(C) provide recommendations to the Administrator on how to improve and continuously advance the TsunamiReady program, particularly on ways to make communities more tsunami resilient through the use of inundation maps and models and other hazard mitigation practices; and

(D) ensure that all components of the program required by section 5(a) of the Tsunami Warning and Education Act (33 U.S.C. 3204(a)) are integrated with ongoing State-based hazard warning, risk management, and resilience activities, including—

(i) integrating activities with emergency response plans, disaster recovery, hazard mitigation, and community development programs in affected areas; and

(ii) integrating information to assist in tsunami evacuation route planning.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH) and the gentleman from Oregon (Ms. BONAMICI) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on H.R. 5309, the bill now under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Texas?

There was no objection.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 5309, the Tsunami Warning, Education, and Research Act of 2014, amends and strengthens the Tsunami Warning and Education Act of 2006. It reauthorizes an important program at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and sharpens its focus on tsunami detection, forecasts, and warnings.

The recent absence of tsunami disasters here in the U.S. does not mean we should stand by as spectators. The threat is very real. The tsunami resulting from the 2011 earthquake in Japan caused massive destruction and is a vivid reminder of the need for enhanced early warning capabilities.

Tsunamis pose a similar threat to America's coastline. They have the ability to injure Americans, damage property, and harm the economy.

This bill updates the tsunami forecasting and warning program operated by NOAA. It modernizes and enhances the accuracy of forecasts, improves standards and guidelines for mapping and modeling tsunamis, and supports research efforts related to tsunami science.

H.R. 5309 expands outreach responsibilities of the NOAA administrator to coordinate with State and local emergency managers to improve tsunami education and awareness. This will help develop resilient communities in the face of tsunamis and other coastal hazards.

This bill strengthens scientific research on these phenomena, fosters outreach programs, and advances technological forecasts to better understand and respond to disasters when they occur.

I want to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRBACHER), the vice chairman of the Science Committee; our Environment Subcommittee ranking member, Ms. BONAMICI of Oregon; and the ranking member of the full committee, Ms. JOHNSON of Texas, for their initiative on this bipartisan legislation.

I really want to single out the gentleman from Oregon for her efforts on this particular subject. She has engaged this subject for the last several months, has been instrumental in our getting here to the floor today, and it is her initiative that is going to benefit the country.

So I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. Bonamici. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of H.R. 5309, the Tsunami Warning, Education, and Research Act of 2014.

So I urge my colleagues to support this bill, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. BONAMICI. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in support of H.R. 5309, the Tsunami Warning, Education, and Research Act of 2014.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER) for cosponsoring this bipartisan legislation with me. I also want to thank the chairman and ranking member of the Science, Space, and Technology Committee, Mr. SMITH and Ms. JOHNSON of Texas, for their support in moving this bill forward.

I also would like to thank the hard-working staff, my personal staff, Mr. ROHRABACHER's staff, and the dedicated committee staff on both sides of the aisle for their help with this bill.

Finally, I would like to thank the State and local emergency management officials, coastal zone managers, and the many scientists and other experts who have contributed their ideas to the development of this bill.

I have met with coastal community groups and emergency planners in my district who are working on a number of fronts to prepare their communities for earthquake and tsunami events.

So much of our ability to prepare, respond, and recover from a tsunami will depend on awareness, planning, and mobilization at the local level. From the Federal agencies all the way down to local emergency managers, we all agree that adequately preparing communities across the country for the threat of natural disasters is of vital importance to the future of this country.

The Tsunami Warning, Education, and Research Act of 2014 is an important step toward making sure that our coastal communities are ready to face the dangers posed by tsunami threats.

In 2004, the Sumatra-Andaman earthquake in Southeast Asia triggered a deadly tsunami event that claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands of people from Indonesia to the coast of Madagascar, prompting Congress to enact the Tsunami Warning and Education Act of 2006.

We were reminded of the significant threat that a tsunami poses to U.S. coastal communities 3 years ago when the Tohoku earthquake near Japan created a devastating tsunami event. That tsunami resulted in the tragic loss of human life and billions of dollars of economic damage, which made it one of the costliest natural disasters we have ever seen, and its damage reached as far as the west coast of the United States—California and Oregon, to be specific.

The events in Indonesia and Japan underscore the importance of this legislation and why we must prepare and protect our coastal communities from similar events.

Maritime commercial activities, vibrant tourist industries, and more than 120 million Americans are all part of the rich coastal U.S. economy, an economy that contributed close to half of the entire U.S. GDP in 2011.

The commercial fishing industry alone supports about 1 million jobs, and the international trade associated with coastal and marine fisheries contributes close to \$70 billion annually to

the U.S. economy. Likewise, more than 13 million Americans work at our commercial ports. They help to move the more than \$1 trillion worth of goods and products to the shelves of our local stores.

These examples show that investing in the resiliency of coastal communities is important to the economic health of not just these regions, but to the Nation. Ensuring that these coastal communities, big and small, have the resources and knowledge necessary to protect these critical aspects from the threat of a tsunami and be prepared, should one occur, is simply good and prudent policy.

Because this body collectively provides assistance when there is a natural disaster, like Superstorm Sandy, for example, planning and preparation to avoid or minimize damage and destruction is important for all of us, whether or not we represent a coastal district.

Oregonians are aware of the threat that a tsunami would pose to their communities, and cities up and down the coast have responded by installing warning sirens and developing evacuation routes, but as newer warning technologies develop and more is understood about the areas that will be hit the hardest, a coordinated effort is required to update preparation and response.

In Tillamook County, Oregon, for example, they recently decided that warning sirens were not the way of the future, favoring the use of warning residents through social media and by phone instead.

Seaside, a small coastal town in my district, has been identified as the most vulnerable community to tsunami on the Oregon coast. In Seaside, local leaders and organizations are proactively educating residents and visitors about tsunami evacuation routes, storage supply locations, and emergency communication systems.

At the Federal level, we can help these communities understand the risks and seriousness of the threats they face and work with them to be prepared, which is why I sponsored this bill, along with my colleague, the gentleman from California (Mr. ROHRABACHER).

H.R. 5309 will update and reauthorize the Tsunami Warning and Education Act and will help to ensure that local and regional decisionmakers have the tools and information they need to develop mitigation and response plans to this ever-present threat and to communicate these plans to the public in an effective and efficient manner.

For distant tsunami events, this legislation will advance research efforts related to improving tsunami forecasting, protection, and notification which could mean extra minutes for emergency responders on the ground and translate into lives saved and tragedies avoided, and it adds ports and harbor operations as entities to be safeguarded by tsunami forecasting capabilities.

This bill will also support research needed to improve our understanding of local tsunami events. A local tsunami, one that is generated just off the coast, has a travel time of about 30 minutes or less.

That is the kind of tsunami most likely to have widespread and devastating impacts on the U.S. coast and on the Caribbean. In Oregon, we know that a catastrophic Cascadia earthquake and tsunami will occur someday. Although no one can predict the next time the Cascadia fault will rupture, we can and must prepare.

At a recent Coastal Caucus event in Florence, Oregon, State-elected officials, tribal governments, community leaders, and business owners attended a panel discussion that focused on the threat posed by tsunami and how we are updating our response plans to reflect new understandings of subduction zone tsunami events. One thing everyone on the panel agreed on: it is not a matter of if, but when.

We have already learned a lot about how to prepare for, mitigate, and respond to tsunamis. I have no doubt that the progress we have made through NOAA's efforts under the Tsunami Warning and Education Act has enhanced the safety of our communities and will save lives, and this good work must be continued.

The coastlines of the United States already play an integral role in the economic prosperity of this country, and we must strengthen their preparedness and resiliency, so they can continue to play that role going forward. In this bipartisan bill, we recognize the need for continued protection of our coastal communities from the impacts of tsunami.

In closing, I want to say that September is National Preparedness Month. It is a reminder to everyone to make disaster preparedness a priority.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill. I hope we can further this discussion and continue to find ways to build America's resiliency to tsunami and other natural disasters.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SMITH of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 5309, the "Tsunami Warning, Education, and Research Act of 2014".

First, I want to thank the Ranking Member of the Environment Subcommittee, Ms. BONAMICI, for her work on this legislation and her commitment to maintaining the health and vitality of the Nation's oceans and coastal communities. I would also like to thank Mr. ROHRABACHER for joining her in this bipartisan effort. And finally, I want to thank the Chairman of the Science Committee, Mr. SMITH, for helping to move this bipartisan bill to the floor today.

Over 120 million Americans call the United States coastline their home. These coastal communities—from major cities to small towns—play a vital role in sustaining the American economy, supporting commercial

fishing enterprises, tourism, and maritime commerce. In fact, approximately one-third of the U.S. gross domestic product has its origins in coastal areas. That is why the bill we are considering today is so important. It would reauthorize the Tsunami Warning and Education Act of 2006, and allow the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to continue to protect Americans and our coastal economies from the threat of tsunami.

This legislation is a perfect example of a familiar saying: an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Our tsunami warning program has been effective over the last eight years, but we must remain vigilant in our preparedness and continue to invest in the research and development, and education and outreach, necessary to improve the resiliency of our coastal communities to these destructive waves. We were reminded in 2004 in Sumatra, and again in 2011 in Japan, of the devastation that can be caused by a tsunami. Since the United States has not been struck by a major tsunami since 1964, I think it is useful to put the potential threat into perspective. I know I do not have to remind anyone of the amount of damage caused by Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy. A single tsunami event in the United States could dwarf the devastation caused by either of those disasters.

Billions and billions of dollars in economic damages and countless lives are at risk if we do not maintain, and improve, our tsunami detection and forecasting capabilities. H.R. 5309 advances NOAA's research efforts to do just that and may ultimately add minutes of critical response time to tsunami warnings. The bill also recognizes that the results of NOAA's research must be translated into outreach and education activities at the state and local level. The effective and timely communication of threats is critical in mitigating the impacts of a natural disaster. Increased warning times are only effective if people know how to respond. I am pleased that this legislation emphasizes and supports local community preparedness.

Resiliency to natural disasters is an important part of strengthening the nation's economic security. I want to ensure that our coastal communities have the resources and tools they need to minimize the loss of life and property caused by a tsunami. Reauthorizing NOAA's tsunami activities by passing H.R. 5309 is a key step in helping to do just that.

I strongly urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. SMITH) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 5309.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

□ 1600

STOPPING TAX OFFENDERS AND PROSECUTING IDENTITY THEFT ACT OF 2014

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 744) to provide effective

criminal prosecutions for certain identity thefts, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill. The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 744

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 "Stopping Tax Offenders and Prosecuting Identity Theft Act of 2014" or the "STOP Identity Theft Act of 2014".

SEC. 2. USE OF DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE RESOURCES WITH REGARD TO TAX RETURN IDENTITY THEFT.

(a) *IN GENERAL.*—The Attorney General should make use of all existing resources of the Department of Justice, including any appropriate task forces, to bring more perpetrators of tax return identity theft to justice.

(b) *CONSIDERATIONS TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT.*—In carrying out this section, the Attorney General should take into account the following:

(1) *The need to concentrate efforts in those areas of the country where the crime is most frequently reported.*

(2) *The need to coordinate with State and local authorities for the most efficient use of their laws and resources to prosecute and prevent the crime.*

(3) *The need to protect vulnerable groups, such as veterans, seniors, and minors (especially foster children) from becoming victims or otherwise used in the offense.*

SEC. 3. VICTIMS OF IDENTITY THEFT MAY INCLUDE ORGANIZATIONS.

Chapter 47 of title 18, United States Code, is amended—

(1) *in section 1028—*

(A) *in subsection (a)(7), by inserting "(including an organization)" after "another person"; and*

(B) *in subsection (d)(7), in the matter preceding subparagraph (A), by inserting "or other person" after "specific individual"; and*

(2) *in section 1028A(a)(1), by inserting "(including an organization)" after "another person".*

SEC. 4. IDENTITY THEFT FOR PURPOSES OF TAX FRAUD.

Section 1028(b)(3) of title 18, United States Code, is amended—

(1) *in subparagraph (B), by striking "or" at the end;*

(2) *in subparagraph (C), by inserting "or" after the semicolon; and*

(3) *by adding at the end the following:*

"(D) during and in relation to a felony under section 7206 or 7207 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986;".

SEC. 5. REPORTING REQUIREMENT.

Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Attorney General shall submit to the Committees on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report that contains the following information:

(1) *Information readily available to the Department of Justice about trends in the incidence of tax return identity theft.*

(2) *Recommendations on additional statutory tools that would aid in the effective prosecution of tax return identity theft.*

(3) *The status on implementing the recommendations of the Department's March 2010 Audit Report 10-21 entitled "The Department of Justice's Efforts to Combat Identity Theft".*

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE) and the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JOHNSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous materials on H.R. 744, currently under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Virginia?

There was no objection.

Mr. GOODLATTE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Identity theft is a crime that leaves its victims feeling exposed and vulnerable while simultaneously inflicting serious financial damage upon them and the financial institutions and government agencies they do business with.

Unfortunately, identity theft is an expanding problem that has recently shifted its target to include the tax refund dollars owed to many hardworking Americans.

The Federal Trade Commission routinely issues statistics listing identity theft as the number one consumer complaint, with American adults having a roughly 1 in 5 chance of being victimized. Fraud related to government benefits and documents regularly comprises the large majority of identity theft reports.

The IRS has recognized the problem and begun shifting assets in response to this expanding threat. In a typical example from earlier this year in Norfolk, Virginia, two hospital workers were sentenced following their convictions for tax-related aggravated identity theft. Their scheme included stealing the personal information of hospital patients and using that information to apply for Federal tax refunds. All told, nearly 80 fraudulent returns were filed, seeking more than \$400,000 in illegitimate refunds.

For the victims of this type of fraud, the original notice is often a rejection by the IRS of their legitimate tax returns. Not surprisingly, this initial rejection is often only the beginning of a long and continuing road to financial recovery. In addition to the delays inherent in resolving their tax return dispute and receiving their refund, the months following the discovery of the identity theft are typically spent trying to restore their credit through an endless stream of paperwork, including police reports, affidavits to credit bureaus, and complaints to various consumer protection agencies.

Unfortunately, in Virginia and nationwide, this is a problem that is only growing in magnitude, partly due to the expanding methods used by criminals to gain access to personal information. From highly sophisticated cyber criminal organizations engaged in activities designed to gain access to personal data on a grand scale to individual cases involving a lost wallet or purse, the ways in which someone with