

109TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 882

To require the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, through the National Weather Service, to establish a tsunami hazard mitigation program for all United States coastal States and insular areas.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEBRUARY 17, 2005

Mr. BOEHLERT introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Science

A BILL

To require the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, through the National Weather Service, to establish a tsunami hazard mitigation program for all United States coastal States and insular areas.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. FINDINGS.**

4 Congress makes the following findings:

5 (1) Tsunamis are very large ocean waves caused
6 by underwater earthquakes or volcanic eruptions,
7 which can travel thousands of miles in open water.

1 (2) Tsunamis are threats to low-elevation coast-
2 al States of the United States and insular areas.

3 (3) Local tsunamis give residents only a few
4 minutes to seek safety.

5 (4) Tsunamis originating in one place give resi-
6 dents of distant localities more time to evacuate po-
7 tentially-threatened areas, but better data is needed
8 to accurately predict their potential to inflict damage
9 in any given area.

10 (5) The announcement of a tsunami warning
11 which results in the evacuation of low-lying areas
12 can be very costly.

13 (6) False tsunami alerts can result in signifi-
14 cant costs to several communities, and reduce the se-
15 riousness with which future alerts will be taken.

16 (7) The failure to issue tsunami alerts can be
17 even more costly and can result in avoidable death
18 and personal injury, as well as destruction of prop-
19 erty.

20 (8) Once a tsunami is generated, the technology
21 exists to analyze seismic changes in the Earth and
22 changes in ocean water height to determine the di-
23 rection any given tsunami is traveling and the popu-
24 lated areas in which it may cause destruction.

1 (9) The key steps to reducing damage caused
2 by tsunamis are to assess the hazard, educate the
3 public to the hazard, monitor the Earth's seismic ac-
4 tivity on a real-time basis, and alert local govern-
5 ments and the public in time for them to take ap-
6 propriate action.

7 **SEC. 2. PROGRAM.**

8 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The National Oceanic and
9 Atmospheric Administration, through the National Weath-
10 er Service, shall establish a tsunami hazard mitigation
11 program for all coastal States and insular areas, to per-
12 form hazard assessment, monitoring and warning, and
13 public education functions. Such program shall—

14 (1) provide warnings of tsunamis, and maintain
15 the equipment necessary to make such warnings;

16 (2) conduct periodic tests of the tsunami warn-
17 ing system to ensure its operational effectiveness;

18 (3) make tsunami warnings available to the
19 broadest extent practicable;

20 (4) establish a long-term plan to determine
21 areas of possible inundation for all reasonably
22 threatened coastal States and insular areas of the
23 United States, beginning with the most populous;

24 (5) coordinate the preparation of local evacu-
25 ation plans for susceptible communities; and

1 (6) coordinate with and maintain membership
2 in the International Tsunami Information Center.

3 (b) PRIMARY BENEFICIARIES.—The program estab-
4 lished under subsection (a) shall be designed for the ben-
5 efit of all coastal States and insular areas of the United
6 States, including Puerto Rico, the United States Virgin
7 Islands, American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth
8 of the Northern Marianas Islands.

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