

112TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 185

Supporting the goals and ideals of National Tsunami Awareness Week.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 29, 2011

Mr. THOMPSON of California submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

RESOLUTION

Supporting the goals and ideals of National Tsunami Awareness Week.

Whereas a tsunami is a series of ocean or sea waves caused by a sudden, large displacement of water most often caused by earthquakes, but also by landslides, volcanic eruptions, and comet or meteorite impacts in the ocean;

Whereas a tsunami is like a fast rising flood tide, storm surge, or an advancing wall of water and strikes with devastating force;

Whereas a tsunami will continue for many hours;

Whereas the first wave is often not the largest nor the most dangerous, and surges may arrive 24 hours or more after the initial wave;

Whereas all U.S. ocean coasts can be impacted by tsunamis, though based on proximity to tsunami sources and sea

floor configurations, some areas are at much greater risk than others;

Whereas destructive and deadly tsunamis have struck Hawaii, Alaska, California, Oregon, Washington, American Samoa, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands within the last 150 years;

Whereas 7,000,000 people currently live in U.S. coastal communities at risk from a destructive tsunami;

Whereas homes, businesses, public buildings, and infrastructure may be damaged by tsunami surges and strong currents during a tsunami;

Whereas damage from a destructive tsunami is usually substantial as debris and tsunami surges can wash away homes, roads, and bridges in areas where the tsunami floods;

Whereas the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (or NOAA) National Weather Service operates two tsunami warning centers, in Palmer, Alaska, and Ewa Beach, Hawaii, which are staffed 24/7, and issue tsunami alerts (warnings, advisories, watches, and information statements) as early as two minutes after an earthquake;

Whereas upon receipt of tsunami alerts, State and local emergency management agencies determine the appropriate response, including whether to clear the beaches, sound sirens, or evacuate people;

Whereas experts at NOAA's Tsunami Warning Centers and the National Weather Service agree that it is critical for all people to know if they live or are visiting an area at-risk to tsunamis to determine the tsunami history and flooding of the area, know tsunami inundation zones, and

to develop a written family disaster plan based on this knowledge;

Whereas the Tsunami Warning Centers recommend that people located in areas at-risk for tsunamis prepare a personal evacuation plan that identifies ahead of time evacuation routes and assembly areas and a local road map;

Whereas the Tsunami Warning Centers recommend that people in areas at-risk for tsunamis prepare a portable disaster supply kit before a tsunami strikes that includes a first aid kit with essential medications, food, and at least 3 gallons of water per person per day for up to 3 to 7 days, protective clothing, rain gear, bedding or sleeping bags, a battery-powered radio, a flashlight, extra batteries, and special items for infant, elderly, or disabled family members;

Whereas the Tsunami Warning Centers recommend that citizens know that a “tsunami warning” means a tsunami with the potential to generate widespread inundation is imminent or expected for the warned area, and people should move up to higher ground or inland or to a designated tsunami evacuation shelter and stay there, listen to local officials, and be aware the first wave may not be the last or largest wave during the tsunami;

Whereas the Tsunami Warning Centers recommend that citizens know that a “tsunami advisory” means a tsunami with the potential to generate strong currents or waves dangerous to those in or very near the water is imminent or expected for the advised area, people should move out of beach areas, marinas, and harbors, stay away from beach areas, marinas, and harbors until local officials say it’s safe to return to the area under an advisory, and the

threat may continue for several hours after the first wave's initial arrival;

Whereas NOAA warns that the warning signs of a tsunami, include a strong earthquake, or one that persists for 20 seconds or longer, the ocean withdraws or rises rapidly, a loud, roaring sound (like an airplane or a train) coming from the ocean, and tsunami warnings broadcast over television and radio, by beach lifeguards, community sirens, text message alerts, National Weather Service Tsunami Warning Center Web sites and on NOAA Weather Radio All Hazard;

Whereas if you see these warning signs, NOAA advises you of what to do, including—

- (1) keep calm;
- (2) immediately move to your local tsunami shelter using defined tsunami evacuation routes;
- (3) move to higher ground that is at least 100 feet in elevation, a mile inland, or to the highest floor of a sturdy building and stay there if there are no evacuation routes defined;
- (4) do not move from a safe location;
- (5) move on foot when possible, do not drive, keep roads clear for emergency vehicles;
- (6) stay tuned to NOAA Weather Radio or news broadcasts for changes in tsunami alerts; and
- (7) stay away from the coast and low-lying areas until local officials say it's safe to return;

Whereas the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration provides more detailed information about tsunamis and tsunami preparedness via its Web site at <http://www.tsunamiready.noaa.gov/>;

Whereas awareness of natural tsunami warning signs saves lives in areas close to the tsunami source; and

Whereas National Tsunami Awareness Week will be the week of March 20, 2011, through March 26, 2011: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) supports the goals and ideals of National
3 Tsunami Awareness Week;

4 (2) encourages the staff of the National Oce-
5 anic and Atmospheric Administration, especially the
6 National Weather Service and the Pacific Tsunami
7 Warning Center and the West Coast/Alaska Tsu-
8 nami Warning Center, and other appropriate Fed-
9 eral agencies, to continue their work of educating
10 people in the United States about tsunami prepared-
11 ness;

12 (3) endorses the efforts of the National Tsu-
13 nami Hazard Mitigation Program ([http://](http://nthmp.tsunami.gov)
14 nthmp.tsunami.gov), a coordinated national effort of
15 Federal, State and local entities, to assess tsunami
16 threats, prepare community response, issue timely
17 and effective warnings, and mitigate damage; and

18 (4) urges the people of the United States to
19 recognize such a week as an opportunity to learn
20 more about the work of the National Oceanic and
21 Atmospheric Administration in warning for and

- 1 mitigating the impact of tsunamis and educating
- 2 citizens about the potential risks of these natural
- 3 disasters.

