

H.R. 2486 “INLAND FLOOD FORECASTING AND WARNING SYSTEM ACT OF 2002”

SPEECH OF

HON. WALTER B. JONES

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, July 11, 2002

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2486) to authorize the National Weather Service to conduct research and development, training, and outreach activities relating to tropical cyclone inland forecasting improvement, and for other purposes:

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Chairman, as I stand before you today, homeowners of my district in Eastern North Carolina are making preparations for another hurricane season along the coast. Unfortunately, many

of my constituents have yet to fully recover from effects of seasons past.

The United States has a significant hurricane problem. More than 60 percent of our population live in coastal states, and every year these citizens must rely on the most accurate information at their disposal as they take the measures necessary to remain safe.

Mr. Chairman, when most people think of the dangers of hurricanes, high winds and storm surges come to mind. However, more people have died from inland flooding over the past 30 years than any other cause. While high winds are a major source of damage, their impacts are often localized to immediate coastal areas. On the contrary, inland flooding threatens communities hundreds of miles from the coast, as powerful rains fall from these huge tropical air masses.

My constituents know all too well the perils of inland flooding. In 1999, Hurricane Floyd brought torrential rains and record flooding to Eastern North Carolina. As riverbanks and

dams gave way, townspeople were lucky to find safety before their homes and businesses were washed away. Of the 56 people who lost their lives in this storm, 50 of them drowned due to inland flooding.

Mr. Chairman, even more heartbreakingly is the fact that these deaths could have been prevented. That is why I stand before you today to voice my full support for H.R. 2486, the Inland Flood Forecasting and Warning System Act, introduced by my colleague from North Carolina, BOB ETHERIDGE.

This bill will give the National Weather Service, emergency officials, and meteorologists the tools necessary to moderate the dangers of tropical cyclones and inland flooding. More importantly it saves lives.

Mr. Chairman, each year citizens along coastal areas do their part to protect families and communities from the effects of hurricanes, now it's time for Congress to do ours.