

title is noncontroversial and simply extends these two acts for an additional 5 years at existing funding levels.

Madam Speaker, I compliment the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) for sponsoring this bill, and urge my colleagues to support this important humanitarian effort.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mrs. CHRISTENSEN asked and was given permission to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, as stated by the previous speaker, H.R. 2584 is noncontroversial legislation that would convey a decommissioned research vessel formerly operated by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to the local government of Utrök Atoll located in the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

Congress should do whatever we can to help the residents of Utrök Atoll. It is imperative that they receive the critical medical testing and treatment necessary to address the increased rates of thyroid cancer and birth defects that have arisen as a result of the U.S. nuclear testing program we conducted in the Northern Marshall Islands between 1946 and 1958.

The conveyance of this former NOAA vessel will allow more convenient and less expensive transportation for these residents who have to make a 265-mile trip to the neighboring islands of Majuro where the medical facilities are located.

I commend the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) for introducing this legislation to help the residents of this very remote atoll in the Pacific Ocean.

This legislation also contains a very important amendment to address a problem regarding serious lapses in procedure affecting past appointments and promotions for NOAA's Uniformed Corps of Officers.

It is important that the chain of command of the NOAA Corps not be disrupted. And while any future repeat of these procedural lapses may not be tolerated, this matter must be addressed expeditiously to prevent any operational or command dysfunction from arising.

I urge all Members to support this legislation.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 2584, a bill I introduced to assist our friends from Utrök Atoll as they continue efforts to resettle and rehabilitate their islands as a result of the effects of the United States nuclear testing in the Marshall Islands. I would like to express my gratitude to Chairman RICHARD POMBO and Ranking Member NICK RAHALL of the Resources Committee for their continued support of Pacific Island issues. I would also like to thank my distinguished colleagues and co-sponsors—Congressmen ANIBAL ACEVEDO-VILA (PR), DAN BURTON (IN), JOHN DOOLITTLE (CA), ELTON GALLEGLY (CA), JEFF FLAKE (AZ) and Congresswoman MADELEINE BORDALLO (Guam).

The purpose of this proposed legislation is simply to authorize the Secretary of Commerce to convey a decommissioned, operable NOAA vessel to the Government of Utrök. The vessel would be used to provide support for radiological monitoring, rehabilitation and resettlement of Utrök, an atoll that is part of the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

As you know, many of the Marshall Islands atolls were devastated by the effects of the U.S. Nuclear Testing activities during the 1940's and 50's. Utrök was one of four atolls acknowledged by the U.S. Government and suffering unsafe radiologic exposure and its residents were forced to evacuate 72 hours after the miscalculated Bravo shot. Two months later, the people of Utrök were assured it was safe to return home. We know now that this was a grave mistake because Utrök residents have since suffered increased radiological illnesses and birth defects. Today, the people of Utrök are seeking to rehabilitate their home island so that it is a safe place to live.

Last year a comprehensive scientific report recommended a potassium fertilizer treatment to accompany the ongoing resettlement process on Utrök, a treatment which would suppress the remaining radioactive Cesium-137 in the soil and prevent its further uptake in the food supply. In addition, the U.S. Department of Energy concluded a MOU with Utrök that committed the DOE to build a Whole body Counting (WBC) facility in order to monitor radioactivity levels in the people of Utrök. This new facility is located about 265 miles away in Majuro and will be used to ensure that the potassium fertilizer regime is effective and the administration of the fertilizer treatment is done properly. However, Utrök residents are responsible for their own transportation to Majuro. Transportation by plane is expensive and available only once per week, and is unreliable, as the Utrök runway is in disrepair and the airline often declines to land. Travel by commercial ships, although less expensive, is infrequent and unfeasible.

One solution to help facilitate transportation between Utrök and Majuro is to transfer a decommissioned NOAA vessel to the Utrök Atoll Local Government. In addition to transport of Utrök residents to the WBC facility, the vessel will be used for moving several tons of potassium fertilizer, transporting equipment and materials for radiological remediation, and transporting USDA food supplies. Because of the Cesium-137 contamination is locally grown food, at least 50% of the diet of Utrök residents must be imported to limit the risk of radiological poisoning.

The Utrök Atoll Local Government also fully supports this measure and adopted a resolution (022-03) on July 4th 2003 stating that the NOAA vessel transfer would be "one of the crucial needs that will fully support our future goals to develop, rehabilitate and resettle the atoll after the aftermath of the 'Bravo' fallout". The Utrök Government also expects the ship to be available for use by other atolls for their respective communities, who will help pay for the ongoing maintenance of the vessel.

Mr. Speaker, I am hopeful that this bill will remind the Congress of our ongoing responsibility to the people of RMI for the mistakes the United States made regarding its nuclear testing activities in the Asia Pacific region. Once again, I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation and I thank my colleagues for their support.

Mrs. CHRISTENSEN. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. CALVERT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2584, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: "A bill to provide for the conveyance to the Utrök Atoll local government of a decommissioned National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration ship, and for other purposes."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Mr. Monahan, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment bills and a concurrent resolution of the House of the following titles:

H.R. 3038. An act to make certain technical and conforming amendments to correct the Health Care Safety Net Amendments of 2002.

H.R. 3140. An act to provide for availability of contact lens prescriptions to patients, and for other purposes.

H.R. 3166. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 57 Old Tappan Road in Tappan, New York, as the "John G. Dow Post Office Building".

H.R. 3185. An act to designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 38 Spring Street in Nashua, New Hampshire, as the "Hugh Gregg Post Office Building".

H.R. 3491. An act to establish within the Smithsonian Institution the National Museum of African American History and Culture, and for other purposes.

H. Con. Res. 320. Concurrent resolution expressing the sense of the Congress regarding the importance of motorsports.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed with amendments in which the concurrence of the House is requested, a joint resolution of the House of the following title:

H.J. Res. 78. Making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2004, and for other purposes.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed bills of the following titles in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 1152. An act to reauthorize the United States Fire Administration, and for other purposes.

S. 1561. An act to preserve existing judgeships on the Superior Court of the District of Columbia.

PREDISASTER MITIGATION PROGRAM REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2003

Mr. LATOURETTE. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3181) to amend the Robert

T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to reauthorize the predisaster mitigation program, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 3181

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 "Predisaster Mitigation Program Reauthorization Act of 2003".

SEC. 2. PREDISASTER HAZARD MITIGATION.

Section 203(m) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5133(m)) is amended by striking "December 31, 2003" and inserting "September 30, 2006".

SEC. 3. HAZARD MITIGATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The last sentence of section 404(a) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5170c(a)) is amended by striking "7.5" and inserting "15".

(b) APPLICABILITY.—The amendment made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to a major disaster declared by the President after September 30, 2002.

SEC. 4. REPAIR ASSISTANCE TO INDIVIDUALS AND HOUSEHOLDS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 408(c)(2) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5174(c)(2)) is amended—

(1) in subparagraph (B) by inserting "initial" before "assistance" the first place it appears;

(2) in subparagraph (C)—

(A) in the subparagraph heading by inserting "INITIAL" before "ASSISTANCE"; and

(B) by inserting "initial" before "assistance"; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

"(D) ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE.—Subject to the limitation contained in subsection (h), the President may provide additional repair assistance under this paragraph to an individual or household that is unable to complete the repairs described in subparagraph (A) using insurance proceeds, loans, or other financial assistance, including assistance from the Small Business Administration."

(b) APPLICABILITY.—The amendments made by subsection (a) shall apply with respect to a major disaster declared by the President after the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 5. STUDY REGARDING COST REDUCTION.

Section 209 of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (42 U.S.C. 5121 note; 114 Stat. 1571) is amended by striking "3 years after the date of the enactment of this Act" and inserting "September 30, 2005".

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATOURETTE) and the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATOURETTE).

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

Madam Speaker, H.R. 3181, the Predisaster Mitigation Program Reauthorization Act of 2003 reauthorizes the Predisaster Mitigation Program for an additional 3 years and allows the President to offer additional home repair assistance to disaster victims; restores the percentage of Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funds to previously authorized levels; and requires the com-

pletion of a Congressional Budget Office study on the cost-effectiveness of the program.

This program, which was originally authorized as a pilot program as a part of the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 was intended to study the effectiveness of mitigation grants in the absence of a disaster, as opposed to solely following a disaster, as is currently the practice.

In addition to reauthorizing the Predisaster Mitigation Program, the bill makes two changes to other programs within the Stafford Act. H.R. 3181 authorizes the President to give additional home repair assistance when the initial amount is insignificant, and it also restores the percentage of funding available under the HMGP. In the omnibus appropriation bill that concluded the last Congress, this percentage was modified, and there was compelling testimony before our subcommittee and also brought to the attention of the members of the full Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure by people in emergency management administrations across the country that the previous levels authorized by the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure were absolutely essential to the work that they do.

The bill also requires the completion of a CBO study on the effectiveness of the PDM. This study is required by December 30, 2006, by which time it is expected that there will be more information on which to study the effectiveness of the PDM.

This legislation is the product of a comprehensive and inclusive legislative process. It is, I believe, a balanced approach to disaster mitigation and worthy of our support. I thank the ranking member of our subcommittee, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON), for her invaluable assistance in crafting this legislation, and also the chairman of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG) and the distinguished ranking member, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR). Madam Speaker, I urge immediate adoption of H.R. 3181.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

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

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3181 the Predisaster Mitigation Reauthorization Act. As the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATOURETTE) pointed out, the purpose is to reauthorize predisaster mitigation which provides assistance on a competitive basis to States and localities to undertake hazard mitigation projects. It is absolutely incontrovertible that if we take steps early in the process, we will protect lives, we will protect property. There is an added benefit in keeping disaster costs down and insurance rates in check.

One way or another, we all pay for natural disaster events through Fed-

eral disaster relief and insurance premiums. Nationwide, annual homeowner insurance premiums have increased 42.2 percent since 1995. In the last 25 years, there have been almost 1,000 Presidential disasters declared, and the GAO has estimated that Federal disaster relief has increased fivefold in the course of the last decade. From 1998 to 2001, this is almost \$40 billion.

Not only will this legislation help homeowners be whole again, but it will save taxpayers billions of dollars in disaster assistance in the long haul.

One of the concerns I and a number of Members had when we had the Federal Emergency Management Agency with its long history of helping our Nation deal with natural disasters moved into the Department of Homeland Security was the concern that the focus on the day-to-day disaster preparedness and emergency response, I would be lost in that large bureaucracy. I am hopeful that in the course of our heightened homeland security concerns, that we do not allow the focus of that agency to become blurred. Maintaining the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program is an essential part of maintaining that focus.

By funding mitigation projects after disasters at the time when communities are most closely focused on the benefits of mitigation and protecting families from future loss, we are able to invent resources and make a difference. Sadly, there are already stories in the newspapers in southern California after, the disastrous fires and the testimony to inadequate planning and enforcement even of local regulations, the people are talking about moving back into harm's way.

The Predisaster Mitigation Program Reauthorization Act we bring to the floor today provides the balance between the predisaster program and reaffirming our support for postmitigation.

The pilot project, as has been referenced would provide for the distribution of grants to carry out disaster mitigation programs, was created to promote appropriate mitigation efforts without having to wait for a disaster to trigger the availability of funds in the future.

Even though authorized to start in 1999, it only began this calendar year, and the competitive grants have yet to be received or awarded. Even though we want to evaluate the effectiveness of the program, and the CBO cannot yet compete its mandate due to the lack of substantive information, it is appropriate for us to reauthorize for 3 years to make sure we get the evidence.

We ought to be very clear that we want to have the facts and figures to support being able to do more in the future. I deeply appreciate the work of our chairman, the gentleman from Alaska (Mr. YOUNG), and the ranking member, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. OBERSTAR), and the work of the chairman of the subcommittee, the

gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATOURETTE), and the ranking member, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON). They provide continuing focus on this important area that too often fail to get the attention it deserves. If we do our job right, we will make a difference for people all across the country: taxpayers, homeowners, and the people who have the tough jobs working in the trenches.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LATOURETTE. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BURNS), a very valuable new member of our subcommittee and full committee. A lot of Members join the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, but few have understood it as quickly as the gentleman from Georgia.

□ 1130

Mr. BURNS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to support passage of H.R. 3181, the Predisaster Mitigation Program Reauthorization Act of 2003. This comprehensive bill, developed on a bipartisan basis, extends the predisaster mitigation program for an additional 3 years, makes two important changes to the Stafford Act, and requires a Congressional Budget Office study of the program's effectiveness.

This program, which was originally included in the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, takes the next step in protecting our communities from the devastating effects of disasters. By encouraging communities to engage in cost-effective disaster mitigation projects before disasters strike, we can dramatically reduce the response and recovery cost of these disasters.

Unlike terrorism, natural disasters can and will strike every State and territory in the United States. From the ice storms that we suffer in my home State of Georgia to hurricanes that have even impacted Washington, D.C., every State and locality can prepare itself to reduce its risk from disasters. Whether it be seismic retrofits of buildings, safe rooms in schools, improved levees, or awareness programs, the actions that we take today will determine how we fare in a disaster. This program makes necessary funds available for such projects.

H.R. 3181 also makes two very important changes to the Stafford Act. These changes have been requested by professional organizations and have strong bipartisan support. H.R. 3181 restores to previously authorized levels the percentage of HMGP funds available following disasters and authorizes additional home repair assistance for individuals when the initial amount of \$5,000 is insufficient. Each of these changes will make recovering from a disaster and preparing for disasters easier, thereby reducing future costs.

Finally, this bill requires a CBO study of the effectiveness of this program, a study which will guide future

considerations for our efforts in the United States to ensure disaster relief.

I urge the adoption of H.R. 3181.

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LATOURETTE. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

I want to thank my friend from Oregon for participating, also my friend from Georgia, again thank all the members of the subcommittee and those in the emergency management field across the country that helped participate and craft this legislation. The very able and capable staff of the committee has reminded me that yesterday we had on the floor a bill dealing with flood insurance which has a mitigation program; and although they have done mighty work, to date they have only secured 938 properties and removed them from further flood damage. This program that we are reauthorizing today has engaged in the purchase of 20,000 properties.

Again, the testimony before the subcommittee was stark and it was clear. It is easy to get a community to come together and spend money after a flood, after a hurricane, after a tornado. It is very difficult to get people to make that investment prior to, but the testimony is clear that if you make that investment in seismic upgrading of buildings or other features throughout parts of the country, you can literally save billions of dollars. It is a good program. I urge support.

Mr. OBERSTAR. Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3181, the Predisaster Mitigation Reauthorization Act of 2003. This bill makes a limited number of necessary amendments to the Stafford Act. The Stafford Act governs the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) responsibilities to help communities prepare for and respond to disasters. Many of the FEMA's functions were transferred to the Department of Homeland Security's Directorate of Emergency Preparedness and Response when that Department was created last year.

Over the last 25 years, this country has had nearly one thousand presidential disaster declarations in the United States and the Insular Territories. These disasters have cost our Nation billions of dollars and taken an untold number of lives.

The Stafford Act authorizes programs that not only provide funding for post-disaster recovery, but also provide funding for important pre-disaster hazard mitigation programs.

In October 2000, Congress passed the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA), which reauthorized the Stafford Act and created several new programs. One of those new programs was a pre-disaster mitigation program that allowed FEMA to award grants to States on a competitive basis to implement pre-disaster mitigation plans. Although authorized to begin in fiscal year 1999, the program began in earnest only a few months ago. No competitive grant applications have yet been received by FEMA, and none of the competitive grants have been awarded. In light of this, H.R. 3181 extends the authorization of this program for another three years in order to give FEMA the time to implement the program

and to give Congress the time to fairly evaluate it. In addition, the bill redirects the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) to conduct a study on the program's effectiveness.

Further, the bill reaffirms our support for the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) that seeks to substantially reduce the risk of future damage, hardship, or loss in any area affected by a major disaster. This program has a proven record of success. It is successful in large part because it funds hazard mitigation projects immediately after a disaster strikes, when the public and local governments are most focused on mitigation measures. In addition, it has the strong support of State and local governments.

Finally, this bill would allow the Undersecretary to provide additional home repair assistance for a homeowner upon the homeowner's showing of an inability to make the necessary repairs by other means. Not being able to properly repair a home after a disaster can add further distress to an already devastating situation. While current law provides for a \$5,000 cap on home repair assistance for individuals who have been impacted by a disaster, there is a significant percentage of homeowners who continue to struggle with unmet needs. This bill remedies that concern.

Madam Speaker, I'd also like to thank my colleagues on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Chairman YOUNG, Subcommittee Chairman LATOURETTE, and Subcommittee Democratic Ranking Member NORTON, for their work on this important bill. I believe this bill provides a balanced approach to mitigation by providing for both pre- and post-disaster mitigation programs. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting it.

Mr. COSTELLO. Madam Speaker, I raise today in support of H.R. 3181, the Predisaster Mitigation Act Reauthorization Act of 2002. I would like to commend my colleagues on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, Chairman YOUNG, Subcommittee Chairman LATOURETTE and Subcommittee Democratic Ranking Member NORTON, for all of their work on this important bill.

This bill makes a limited number of necessary amendments to the Stafford Act, which governs the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) responsibilities to help communities prepare for and respond to disasters. The Stafford Act authorizes programs that provide funding for both post-disaster recovery, and for important pre-disaster hazard mitigation projects.

The pre-disaster mitigation program was authorized to begin in fiscal year 1999; however, the program began in earnest only a few months ago. The program allowed FEMA to award grants to states on a competitive basis to implement pre-disaster mitigation plans. Because of its late start, no competitive grant applications have yet been received by FEMA, and none of the competitive grants have been awarded. Among other things, this bill extends the authorization of this program for another three years to give FEMA the time necessary to implement the program and to give Congress the time necessary to fairly evaluate it.

Madam Speaker, I believe this is a good bill that provides a balanced approach to both pre- and post-disaster mitigation programs. I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting the bill.

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

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. LATOURETTE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3181.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. LATOURETTE. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 3181.

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

There was no objection.

UNITED STATES FIRE ADMINISTRATION REAUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2003

Mr. BOEHLERT. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 1152) to reauthorize the United States Fire Administration, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read as follows:

S. 1152

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

TITLE I—UNITED STATES FIRE ADMINISTRATION REAUTHORIZATION

SEC. 101. SHORT TITLE.

This title may be cited as the "United States Fire Administration Reauthorization Act of 2003".

SEC. 102. RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF POSITION OF UNITED STATES FIRE ADMINISTRATOR.

Section 1513 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (6 U.S.C. 553) does not apply to the position or office of Administrator of the United States Fire Administration, who shall continue to be appointed and compensated as provided by section 5(b) of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. 2204(b)).

SEC. 103. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

Section 17(g)(1) of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. 2216(g)) is amended by striking subparagraphs (A) through (K) and inserting the following:

"(A) \$63,000,000 for fiscal year 2005, of which \$2,266,000 shall be used to carry out section 8(f);

"(B) \$64,850,000 for fiscal year 2006, of which \$2,334,000 shall be used to carry out section 8(f);

"(C) \$66,796,000 for fiscal year 2007, of which \$2,404,000 shall be used to carry out section 8(f); and

"(D) \$68,800,000 for fiscal year 2008, of which \$2,476,000 shall be used to carry out section 8(f)."

TITLE II—FIREFIGHTING RESEARCH AND COORDINATION

SEC. 201. SHORT TITLE.

This title may be cited as the "Firefighting Research and Coordination Act".

SEC. 202. NEW FIREFIGHTING TECHNOLOGY.

Section 8 of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. 2207) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsection (e) as subsection (g); and

(2) by inserting after subsection (d) the following:

"(e) ASSISTANCE TO OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES.—At the request of other Federal agencies, including the Department of Agriculture and the Department of the Interior, the Administrator may provide assistance in fire prevention and control technologies, including methods of containing insect-infested forest fires and limiting dispersal of resultant fire particle smoke, and methods of measuring and tracking the dispersal of fine particle smoke resulting from fires of insect-infested fuel.

"(f) TECHNOLOGY EVALUATION AND STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—In addition to, or as part of, the program conducted under subsection (a), the Administrator, in consultation with the National Institute of Standards and Technology, the Inter-Agency Board for Equipment Standardization and Inter-Operability, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, the Directorate of Science and Technology of the Department of Homeland Security, national voluntary consensus standards development organizations, interested Federal, State, and local agencies, and other interested parties, shall—

"(A) develop new, and utilize existing, measurement techniques and testing methodologies for evaluating new firefighting technologies, including—

"(i) personal protection equipment;

"(ii) devices for advance warning of extreme hazard;

"(iii) equipment for enhanced vision;

"(iv) devices to locate victims, firefighters, and other rescue personnel in above-ground and below-ground structures;

"(v) equipment and methods to provide information for incident command, including the monitoring and reporting of individual personnel welfare;

"(vi) equipment and methods for training, especially for virtual reality training; and

"(vii) robotics and other remote-controlled devices;

"(B) evaluate the compatibility of new equipment and technology with existing firefighting technology; and

"(C) support the development of new voluntary consensus standards through national voluntary consensus standards organizations for new firefighting technologies based on techniques and methodologies described in subparagraph (A).

"(2) STANDARDS FOR NEW EQUIPMENT.—

(A) The Administrator shall, by regulation, require that new equipment or systems purchased through the assistance program established by the first section 33 meet or exceed applicable voluntary consensus standards for such equipment or systems for which applicable voluntary consensus standards have been established. The Administrator may waive the requirement under this subparagraph with respect to specific standards.

"(B) If an applicant for a grant under the first section 33 proposes to purchase, with assistance provided under the grant, new equipment or systems that do not meet or exceed applicable voluntary consensus standards, the applicant shall include in the application an explanation of why such equipment or systems will serve the needs of the applicant better than equipment or systems that do meet or exceed such standards.

"(C) In making a determination whether or not to waive the requirement under subparagraph (A) with respect to a specific standard, the Administrator shall, to the greatest extent practicable—

"(i) consult with grant applicants and other members of the fire services regarding the impact on fire departments of the requirement to meet or exceed the specific standard;

"(ii) take into consideration the explanation provided by the applicant under subparagraph (B); and

"(iii) seek to minimize the impact of the requirement to meet or exceed the specific standard on the applicant, particularly if meeting the standard would impose additional costs.

"(D) Applicants that apply for a grant under the terms of subparagraph (B) may include a second grant request in the application in the event that the Administrator does not approve the primary grant request on the grounds of the equipment not meeting applicable voluntary consensus standards."

SEC. 203. COORDINATION OF RESPONSE TO NATIONAL EMERGENCY.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 10 of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. 2209) is amended—

(1) by redesignating subsection (b) as subsection (c); and

(2) by inserting after subsection (a) the following:

"(b) MUTUAL AID SYSTEMS.—

"(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator shall provide technical assistance and training to State and local fire service officials to establish nationwide and State mutual aid systems for dealing with national emergencies that—

"(A) include threat assessment and equipment deployment strategies;

"(B) include means of collecting asset and resource information to provide accurate and timely data for regional deployment; and

"(C) are consistent with the Federal Response Plan.

"(2) MODEL MUTUAL AID PLANS.—The Administrator shall develop and make available to State and local fire service officials model mutual aid plans for both intrastate and interstate assistance."

(b) REPORT ON STRATEGIC NEEDS.—Within 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator of the United States Fire Administration shall report to the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation and the House of Representatives Committee on Science on the need for a strategy concerning deployment of volunteers and emergency response personnel (as defined in section 6 of the Firefighters' Safety Study Act (15 U.S.C. 2233e)), including a national credentialing system, in the event of a national emergency.

(c) REPORT ON FEDERAL RESPONSE PLAN.—Within 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Department of Homeland Security shall transmit a report to the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, the Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs, and the House of Representatives Committee on Science describing plans for revisions to the Federal Response Plan and its integration into the National Response Plan, including how the revised plan will address response to terrorist attacks, particularly in urban areas, including fire detection and suppression and related emergency services.

SEC. 204. TRAINING.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Section 7(d)(1) of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. 2206(d)(1)) is amended—

(1) by striking "and" after the semicolon in subparagraph (E);

(2) by redesignating subparagraph (F) as subparagraph (N); and

(3) by inserting after subparagraph (E) the following: