

HR 882 IH

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.

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

SECTION 1. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

- (1) Tsunamis are very large ocean waves caused by underwater earthquakes or volcanic eruptions, which can travel thousands of miles in open water.
- (2) Tsunamis are threats to low-elevation coastal States of the United States and insular areas.
- (3) Local tsunamis give residents only a few minutes to seek safety.
- (4) Tsunamis originating in one place give residents of distant localities more time to evacuate potentially-threatened areas, but better data is needed to accurately predict their potential to inflict damage in any given area.

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

(6) False tsunami alerts can result in significant costs to several communities, and reduce the seriousness with which future alerts will be taken.

(7) The failure to issue tsunami alerts can be even more costly and can result in avoidable death and personal injury, as well as destruction of property.

(8) Once a tsunami is generated, the technology exists to analyze seismic changes in the Earth and changes in ocean water height to determine the direction any given tsunami is traveling and the populated areas in which it may cause destruction.

(9) The key steps to reducing damage caused by tsunamis are to assess the hazard, educate the public to the hazard, monitor the Earth's seismic activity on a real-time basis, and alert local governments and the public in time for them to take appropriate action.

SEC. 2. PROGRAM.

(a) Establishment- The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, through the National Weather Service, shall establish a tsunami hazard mitigation program for all coastal States and insular areas, to perform hazard assessment, monitoring and warning, and public education functions. Such program shall--

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

(2) conduct periodic tests of the tsunami warning system to ensure its operational effectiveness;

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

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

(5) coordinate the preparation of local evacuation plans for susceptible communities; and

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

(b) Primary Beneficiaries- The program established under subsection (a) shall be designed for the benefit of all coastal States and insular areas of the United States, including Puerto Rico, the United States Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands.

END

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