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**Remarks for the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations**

Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development Appropriations  
Oversight Hearing on Hurricane Sandy Supplemental Implementation  
Wednesday, March 13, 2013

This October, Connecticut experienced one of the worst storms in its history. Superstorm Sandy left in its wake billions of dollars in damage to transportation infrastructure, utility lines, and personal property, and the people of Southwest Connecticut are still recovering.

As catastrophic as Sandy was, it is almost impossible to believe that this is the second time in as many years that Connecticut was visited by a hurricane-level storm. Tropical Storm Irene battered New England in August 2011, October 2011 saw record and crippling snowfalls for our region, and a powerful nor'easter in March 2010 blanketed parts of my state with over a foot of snow. By the time Sandy made landfall, many of my constituents were finding themselves, their homes and their personal property at the center of a major weather event for the fourth time in just two years, resulting in millions of dollars of damages that had to be paid for by both the individuals and by the federal government. As we continue to recover from Sandy, it is clear there is more we can and must do to ensure our infrastructure can endure the next big storm.

The Army Corps will play a critical part in this recovery process through its flood mitigation work. In January 2013 – 75 long days after Sandy hit – Congress finally approved a comprehensive storm recovery package to assist those affected by the storm. Included in this package was \$5.4 billion for the Army Corps of Engineers' flood mitigation projects. I was proud to be a strong advocate among my colleagues for this bill and for the funding therein. This important funding will help the Corps to expedite flood and storm damage reduction, perform comprehensive studies to address flood risks of coastal areas, and mitigate the impact of future natural disasters.

I am encouraged that some of this funding could be directed towards a comprehensive investigation of the flooding issues in Southwestern Connecticut, which would likely provide real relief for my constituents. The thought process here is simple: spend money now on mitigation and save the government and taxpayers money when the next storm inevitably hits. To put a fine point on it, as of March 8, FEMA had verified \$24.4 million in damages in Fairfield County a result of Sandy. Of that \$24.4 million, nearly all of it—\$22.9 million—was directly caused by flooding.

My district has been forced to wait far too long for assistance: in 2010, my office secured authorizations for the Army Corps of Engineers to conduct flood mitigation studies for all bodies

of water within Fairfield and New Haven Counties and to provide recommendations for preventing future flood damages – studies that have yet to even begin. With the funding authorized in the Hurricane Sandy supplemental, it is my hope that the Corps will have the resources it needs to conduct these studies so that we may learn how best to prepare ourselves and our shoreline for future storms. Since receiving authorizations for these studies, I have been told year after year and storm after storm that Congress will not allow the Army Corps to take on any new projects. If Congress is serious about its commitment to flood mitigation, work must begin on this project now.

I ask my friends on this panel to take seriously the real and costly flooding problems my constituents and other shoreline residents face and strongly encourage you to eliminate this bureaucratic hurdle. Further, I respectfully request that a comprehensive study into Southwestern Connecticut's flooding issues be a high consideration as the Army Corps of Engineers sets its priorities for funds allocated through the Sandy Supplemental.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jim H." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a smaller "H" followed by a horizontal line.