

COMMITTEE ON
**SCIENCE, SPACE, AND
TECHNOLOGY**
CHAIRMAN LAMAR SMITH



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**Statement of Research Subcommittee Chairman Larry Bucshon (R-Ind.)
Hearing on “Federal Efforts to Reduce the Impacts of Windstorms”**

Chairman Bucshon: Good morning, I would like to welcome everyone to our hearing.

Today’s hearing will focus on how we can reduce the impacts of debilitating storms on our communities across the country. Even with improved forecasting capabilities and awareness, these storms can be unexpected and leave a trail of destruction in their paths.

In addition to literally destroying lives, these windstorms shut down entire economies of a region during the time it takes to rebuild. Structures, while more resilient than they used to be, are still often not built to sustain high winds or the storm surge that may follow these storms. Building codes, practices, and performance standards can help, but oftentimes retrofitting an existing building is simply too costly given the relatively small risk of a direct hit of a windstorm.

Federal agencies currently conduct research and development to help inform the resilience of buildings and communities, but it is not clear how each agency is conducting unique work that is not duplicated by another agency. I believe that a coordination mechanism would help shed light into what is going on at the federal level, and how it can be strengthened to ensure better coordination.

Every year the federal government funds not only disaster relief but also emergency supplemental appropriations when states are hit particularly hard by unexpected disasters. I believe that we need to be more responsible about planning how to deal with natural disasters and minimize the need for disaster supplemental funding. I am curious to hear from our witnesses if they believe better research could cut down on that dollar figure.

Since the time that my colleague Representative Neugebauer introduced his windstorm research bill in late April, several Midwestern states have endured significant damage and loss of lives from powerful tornadoes. I would not like to yield to him to share some background on that legislation.

We have a panel of witnesses before us who can articulate what it will take to cut down on the economic impacts and lives lost from these storms. I would like to extend my appreciation to each of our witnesses for taking the time and effort to appear before us today. We look forward to your testimony.