THE Episcopal CHURCH

Climate & Resiliency

Christians have a long history of working to preserve the natural beauty and sustainability of God's creation. This concern reflects God's mandate to care for the earth, other species placed under our care and influence, and to utilize natural and living resources in a sustainable and unselfish manner.

As the annual and long-term climate patterns shift, the world's oceans are expected to rise by 1 to 4 feet by 2100, with the high end of these estimates warning that seas could rise up to six and a half feet. This change will have catastrophic impacts on island nations, coastal communities, and those who will eventually host these climate refugees. In addition, as oceans warm they have been found to cause an increase in precipitation during storms, an affect noted this hurricane season with the record breaking rainfall of Hurricane Harvey, or with the storm surge of non-hurricane strength Sandy in New York and New Jersey. The result is that coastal communities are facing more devastation from even lower level storms. The combined effect is a situation which requires immediate action to safeguard communities, particularly since the 2020 Census is expected to reveal that 47% if the U.S. population lives in coastal counties.

Programs that help communities prepare for natural disasters are spread across the federal government. Many funding programs are reactive, seeking to rebuild communities to be stronger and better prepared after a disaster. These programs are critically important, but Congress must also act to proactively invest to help communities before recovery is necessary. We urge Congress to fully fund the suite of programs that help ensure a comprehensive approach to resiliency, preparedness, and recovery including:

- The National Institute for Standards and Technology: **Disaster Resilience Research Grants Program** funds projects to conduct research aimed at advancing the principles of resilience in building design and building codes and standards. Research supports the overall effort of developing science-based building codes by evaluating potential technologies and architectural design criteria to improve disaster resilience.

- The **Hazard Mitigation Grant Program** at FEMA, or HMGP, aims to help communities implement hazard mitigation measures following a disaster. The key purpose of this grant program is to enact mitigation measures that reduce the risk of loss of life and property from future disasters.

- The **Community Resilience Program** at the Department of Housing and Urban Development invests in evidence-based approaches that take into account our best understanding of future risk. Doing so will increase the resilience of communities to natural hazards such as tropical storms, tornadoes, and wildfires.

- The U.S. Department of Agriculture's **Tree Assistance Program** (TAP) provides payments to qualifying orchardists and nursery tree growers after a natural disaster. The funds may help farmers replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes, and vines damaged by the disaster.

LEARN MORE ABOUT...

The Federal National Disaster Recovery Framework
Disaster Resilience Study, National Academies of Sciences
Climate Resilience Toolkit
Bipartisan Climate Solutions Caucus

OFFICE *of* GOVERNMENT RELATIONS
110 Maryland Avenue, NE Suite 309 ≤ Washington DC 20002 ≤ 800.228.0515 *P* 202.547.7300 ≤ advocacy.episcopalchurch.org