

## [Senate Amendment to H.R. 23, the National Windstorm Impact Reduction Act Reauthorization of 2015](#)

### FLOOR SITUATION

On Wednesday, September 16, 2015, the House will consider the Senate Amendment to [H.R. 23](#), the National Windstorm Impact Reduction Act Reauthorization of 2015, under suspension of the rules. H.R.23 was introduced on January 6, 2015 by Rep. Randy Neugebauer (R-TX) and was passed by the House by a vote of [381 to 39](#) on January 7, 2015. The Senate then passed the bill, with an amendment, by [unanimous consent](#), on July 23, 2015.

### SUMMARY

H.R. 23 authorizes the National Windstorm Impact Reduction Program (NWIRP) at \$21.4 million for each fiscal year through fiscal year 2017. The bill amends the National Windstorm Impact Reduction Act of 2004 to revise provisions governing the NWIRP, including designating the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) as the primary entity responsible for the Program.

The bill also directs the NIST to establish an Advisory Committee on Windstorm Impact Reduction, which is required to assess the priorities for the strategic plan for the NWIRP. The Committee is required to submit a biennial report to the Director of Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) on the progress made toward achieving the goals set out by the strategic plan. The Advisory Committee would sunset on September 30, 2017. The Senate Amendment provides increased flexibility to the Advisory Committee on Windstorm Impact Reduction in providing recommendations in this report. The Senate Amendment also made several conforming changes to the bill based upon agency feedback.<sup>1</sup>

### BACKGROUND

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<sup>1</sup> See [Senate Report 114-62](#) at 3.

In the United States in 2011, windstorms caused nearly \$11 billion in total direct property losses, injured nearly 7, 000 people and caused nearly 700 deaths.<sup>2</sup> NWIRP, which was established in 2004 but was never reauthorized<sup>3</sup>, is a multi-agency program (National Science Foundation, Federal Emergency Management Agency, National Institute of Standards and Technology, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) that supports activities and research to improve the understanding of windstorms and their impacts, and develops and encourages the implementation of cost-effective mitigation measures to reduce these impacts. The bill will help improve building codes, voluntary standards, and construction practices for buildings and homes.

According to the bill sponsor, “Natural disasters are costly, but we have found that \$1 in investments in resilience against windstorms can result in up to \$4 dollars in savings in disaster response while also helping reduce the loss of life associated with these storms. [. . .] Breakthroughs from this research, such as the first FEMA endorsed above ground storm shelters, are why I first developed this bill back in 2004. While significant progress has been made, more can be done.”<sup>4</sup>

H.R. 23 is similar to [H.R. 1786](#), the *National Windstorm Impact Reduction Act Reauthorization of 2014*, which passed in the House on July 14, 2014 by [voice vote](#).

### **COST**

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) [estimates](#) that implementing H.R. 23 would cost \$42 million over the 2016 to 2020 period. Pay-as-you-go procedures do not apply because enacting the legislation would not affect direct spending or revenues.

### **STAFF CONTACT**

For questions or further information please contact [John Huston](#) with the House Republican Policy Committee by email or at 6-5539.

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<sup>2</sup> National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Weather Service, Summary of Natural Hazard Statistics for 2011 in the United States, May 2012, at <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/om/hazstats/sum11.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> See [Senate Report 114-62](#) at 2.

<sup>4</sup> See Rep. Neugebauer [Press Release](#), Jan. 7, 2015.