



Briefing Notice

How Can the Federal Government Help Prepare Local Communities for Natural Disasters?

Wednesday, April 1, 2015

2 PM – 3:30 PM

485 Russell Senate Office Building

Please RSVP to expedite check-in: www.eesi.org/040115resilience#rsvp

Live webcast (connection permitting) will be streamed at: www.eesi.org/livecast

The **Environmental and Energy Study Institute** (EESI) invites you to a briefing examining the recommendations of the White House State, Local and Tribal Leaders Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience. The bipartisan Task Force of 26 governors, mayors, tribal leaders, and other officials spent a year compiling recommendations on how the federal government could help local communities be more resilient to climate change impacts. From an initial 500 ideas, the Task Force produced a report of 35 concrete recommendations for tools, training, funding and services the Federal Government can provide to help the nation's communities increase their resilience. Even without taking into account the effects of climate change, making communities more resilient saves lives—and saves money in the long run. Speakers for this forum are:

- **Dr. Jennifer Jurado**, Director, Environmental Planning & Community Resilience, Broward County, FL
- **Sam Ricketts**, Director, Washington DC Office of Governor Jay Inslee (D-WA)
- **Carolyn Berndt**, Program Director for Sustainability, Federal Advocacy, National League of Cities

The Task Force recommendations represent an enormous effort to understand the needs and challenges faced by communities across the country as they prepare for natural disasters that are more frequent and severe due to climate change. These challenges are not far away in the future: states and local communities are already experiencing the devastating consequences of climate change. In 2014, California's extreme and prolonged drought led to the loss of 17,000 jobs and \$2.2 billion in economic losses. Record-setting extreme rainfall in Colorado during September 2013 caused floods that destroyed thousands of homes, businesses, bridges and roads, causing an estimated \$2 billion in damages. Many local leaders have already begun taking serious steps to respond to these kinds of challenges, with the understanding that action cannot be delayed. But small communities often lack the necessary resources to be fully effective, making federal help critical.

Among the Task Force's recommendations is a proposal that the federal government spur the creation of Community Resilience Plans to help local leaders plan for natural disasters. The Task Force also calls for the removal of federal regulatory barriers during rebuilding after a natural disaster, and prioritizing rebuilding with resilient infrastructure that will be better able to weather the next storm. The Task Force emphasizes that the federal government has a lot of leverage: it can require infrastructure projects benefiting from federal funding to take into account climate vulnerabilities.

This event is the first in a two-part series on climate resilience. The second event, to be held April 20, will focus on tribal climate resilience and adaptation issues, with a focus on the Isle de Jean Charles Band of Biloxi-Chitimacha-Choctaw in Louisiana. It will soon be the first coastal indigenous community to relocate due to sea level rise in the modern era.

This event is free and open to the public.

For more information, contact Laura Small at lsmall@eesi.org or (202) 662-1892.

