



**Opening Statement**  
**Chairman Michael G. Oxley**  
**Committee on Financial Services**

**Subcommittee on Housing and Community Opportunity**  
**The National Flood Insurance Program: Review and Reauthorization**  
**April 1, 2003**

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Today we are here to discuss the Federal Emergency Management Agency's National Flood Insurance Program, which provides valuable protection for homeowners across the country who live on the nation's floodplains. Though most of these homes have never flooded, the NFIP is an important safeguard with a proven record of success.

In January of this year, Ranking Member Frank and I worked with our counterparts in the Senate to reauthorize the NFIP. Though there are some who wanted a five-year authorization, we opted for a one-year with the intention of studying the problem of costly repetitive loss claims. Congressmen Baker, Bereuter and Blumenauer, who are here to testify in support of the bills they have introduced on this subject, are this Congress' foremost experts on flood insurance. Their dedication to the issue shows a commitment to their constituents and to sound government. I welcome their appearance before us today.

As we examine the proposed legislation in the coming months and prepare to reauthorize the flood insurance program, I look forward to working with our colleagues and with the Administration to address this issue. In light of the nation's troubled economy, the approximately \$200 million being spent on an annual basis on repetitive flood loss properties is an unacceptable expense.

It is important to note that the problem of repetitive flood loss properties is one that exists in nearly every one of the fifty states. In my own district, the Blanchard River and Black Fork Creek have caused some homeowners to be flooded more than once. Property owners in flood-prone areas must be responsible for working with their communities and with FEMA to avoid repetitive flood losses. At the same time, we must ensure that the rights of these property owners are protected and that the NFIP is responsive to their needs.

Let me take a moment to welcome the other witnesses we will be hearing from today. In particular, I'd like to extend a special welcome to Chad Berginnis. Mr. Berginnis, the Floodplain Management Program Supervisor for the Ohio Department of Natural Resource's Division of Water, is appearing on behalf of the Association of State Floodplain Managers. I'd like to thank you for the important work you and your colleagues are doing for homeowners in the Fourth District and throughout Ohio, and I look forward to hearing your testimony this afternoon.

Today's hearing will be a valuable step towards reauthorizing the National Flood Insurance Program and eliminating costly repetitive flood losses throughout the United States. Once again, thank you, Chairman Ney, for your leadership on this issue.

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