

Opening Statement
Chairman Michael G. Oxley
Committee on Financial Services
Subcommittee on Housing and Community Opportunity
July 19, 2001

“The National Flood Insurance Program and Repetitive Flood Losses”

Thank you Chairwoman Roukema. Today the Subcommittee addresses a problem that we're reminded of with each serious flood, storm or hurricane: some properties flood time and again and then must be bailed out at the expense of others.

For this reason, I want to commend my colleagues for bringing this issue to the attention of the Subcommittee. As noted, Representatives Bereuter and Blumenauer have introduced H.R. 1428. Representative Bentsen has introduced H.R. 1551. A bill was introduced on this topic just yesterday by Representative Baker, whose district has been especially hard-hit by floods in the past.

With approximately \$200 million being spent on an annual basis on repetitive flood loss properties, it is important that we in the Congress work with the Administration to address this issue. Any solution must balance the need for residential flood insurance with the need for fiscal responsibility. We are responsible to the taxpayers to reduce unnecessary liabilities. Similarly, property owners in flood-prone areas must be responsible for working with their communities and with the Federal Emergency Management Agency to avoid repetitive flood losses.

I am confident that and the testimony of all our witnesses will be of great help as we attempt to find a more efficient and effective approach to eliminating costly repetitive flood losses throughout the United States.

Once again, Madam Chairwoman, thank you for providing leadership on this issue.