



January 11, 2012

Dear Representative,

As you know, the House of Representatives will be debating supplemental appropriations for Superstorm Sandy relief on Tuesday, January 15, 2013. Taxpayers for Common Sense urges you to amend the disaster assistance legislation that is intended for Superstorm Sandy relief so that it is limited, targeted, and truly meeting emergency needs.

The full package is in three parts: a \$9.7 billion increase in the National Flood Insurance Program borrowing authority (already enacted); \$17 billion in disaster relief proposed by Rep. Harold Rogers (R-KY); and \$33.7 billion in additional spending proposed by Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen (R-NJ). The final total would be more than \$60 billion. The unfortunate reality is the bill has been stuffed with non-emergency appropriations items and sweeping changes in water policy that will have long-standing fiscal impacts. This is an inappropriate response to a major disaster and does disservice to those afflicted by Sandy. Emergency spending for Sandy victims has been delayed more than a month because of controversy over extraneous provisions.

A few high/lowlights of the bill:

- **Expanded authorization for new Corps of Engineers shore protection projects.** A likely outcome of this legislation will be a massive growth in authorized storm and flood damage reduction projects with little scrutiny or new thinking. This will add to a \$70 billion backlog of Corps projects while helping encourage development in harm's way.
- **Removes cost-sharing** for Corps of Engineers ongoing construction projects in the areas affected by Sandy. The bill is vague as to whether it extends this provision for the many times beach projects are expected to be rebuilt over their 50-year authorized life. Furthermore all beach sand-pumping projects are considered to be in construction status during the full life of the project, so this provision is overly broad. By law, the cost-share should be 65 percent federal, 35 percent non-federal for first time construction. For projects authorized after 2002, it is 50 percent federal, 50 percent non-federal for each ongoing rebuild of the project.

- **Slaps emergency designation on more than \$200 million in weather and forecasting equipment for NOAA.** These may be worthwhile investments, but they should be considered in the normal appropriations process.
- **Spends hundreds of millions of dollars on federal facilities.** For example, the Army is provided \$5.37 million in operations and maintenance funding to repair bases and facilities affected by Sandy. That represents 0.01 percent of the base (not overseas contingency operations) operations and maintenance funding the Army received in FY12. There's plenty of room in the budget to reprogram for this and other agencies.
- **Purchases seemingly enough new cars for a variety of agencies to fill a parking lot.** There's fifteen vehicles for the Drug Enforcement Agency, three for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, still more vehicles for the FBI, Secret Service, Immigrations and Customs Enforcement, and Customs and Border Protection.
- **Creates a \$16 billion Community Development Fund for 47 states.** The amendment expands a proposal from the President that was included in the Sandy Supplemental adopted by the Senate in the 112th Congress. Originally intended for states affected by Sandy, this amendment extends it to all major disaster declarations in 2011, 2012, and 2013. That encompasses 47 states and Puerto Rico.
- **Doubles highway spending from Senate bill, makes program national.** The amendment provides more than \$2 billion for the Federal-Aid Highways Emergency relief program, which is \$1.7 billion more than the President requested and \$1.1 billion more than was in the Senate bill last year. This is not restricted to Sandy states.

This bill is supposed to be about Sandy recovery, but sadly some funding is a cynical attempt to take advantage of the emergency to fund projects that should be considered in the normal appropriations process. We urge the House of Representatives to thoroughly scrub the bill of extraneous spending on the floor. The National Flood Insurance Program has increased borrowing authority. FEMA Administrator Fugate has indicated that the Disaster Relief Fund will be able to pay claims until the Spring. In light of the nation's dire fiscal situation, this bill should be amended to fund only the true disaster related needs. To discuss further, please contact me or Steve Ellis at 202-546-8500 or [steve\(at\)taxpayer.net](mailto:steve(at)taxpayer.net).

Sincerely,



Ryan Alexander
President