

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Hurricane Hazard Briefing on Capitol Hill

ALEXANDRIA, VA – Forecasters at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration are predicting at least seven Atlantic hurricanes this year, with as many as five matching Ivan’s destructive force. An unprecedented four hurricanes struck Florida in rapid succession during the fall of 2004. Since 1900, tropical storms making landfall on the U.S. Gulf Coast have caused more than \$100 billion in damages (adjusted to 2004 dollars). Over the past 30 years coastal population growth has quadrupled; more than 69 million people now reside along the hurricane prone coastlines in the United States.

In light of the hurricane season predictions, the Congressional Hazards Caucus Coalition will sponsor two one-hour briefings on “Hurricanes: Lessons Learned to Reduce Future Risk,” on Capitol Hill, **Monday July 11, 2005**. Both briefings will cover the same content, including what scientists, engineers and first responders have learned from tracking storm movements, responding to emergencies, and surveying coastal and infrastructure damage. The first briefing will be held at **10:00 am in room 253 of the Russell Senate Office Building**, and the second will be at **1:30 pm in room 2325 of the Rayburn House Office Building**.

The meeting will be moderated by Linda Rowan, director of Government Affairs at the American Geological Institute. Speakers will discuss ways to enhance tracking and warnings, mitigate losses, improve building safety and prepare for hurricane emergencies. Below is a list of the speakers and their topics of discussion. There will be time for questions.

Asbury (Abby) Sallenger, Research Oceanographer, U.S. Geological Survey, Center for Coastal & Watershed Studies, St. Petersburg, Florida – *Coastal erosion caused by hurricanes: Reducing the loss of infrastructure and beach front property by knowing the risks.*

Timothy A. Reinhold, Civil Engineer, Vice President of Engineering, Institute for Business and Home Safety, Tampa, Florida – *Protecting infrastructure from hurricanes: Lessons learned about the importance and effectiveness of adopting and following modern building codes.*

Scott Kiser, Meteorologist, NOAA, National Weather Service, Tropical Cyclone Manager, Silver Spring, Maryland – *Tracking hurricanes: How well, how fast and how effective.*

Joseph C. Becker, Senior Vice President for Preparedness and Response, American Red Cross, Washington, DC – *Advice from the Red Cross on how to prepare for the hurricane season.*

The briefing is sponsored by the following members of the Hazards Caucus Coalition: American Geological Institute, American Geophysical Union, American Red Cross, American Society of Civil Engineers, Association of American Geographers, Association of Contingency Planners, Earthquake Engineering Research Institute, Geological Society of America, Incorporated Research Institutions for Seismology, National Institute of Building Safety, Multihazard Mitigation Council, Building Seismic Safety Society, Seismological Society of America, Western Disaster Center, and W.F.Baird and Associates.

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The American Geological Institute is a nonprofit federation of 43 scientific and professional associations that represent more than 120,000 geologists, geophysicists, and other earth scientists. Founded in 1948, AGI provides information services to geoscientists, serves as a voice of shared interests in our profession, plays a major role in strengthening geoscience education, and strives to increase public awareness of the vital role the geosciences play in society's use of resources and interaction with the environment. More information about AGI can be found at <http://www.agiweb.org>.