

**WASHINGTON, DC** – Congressman Joe Courtney today testified before the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works about the impact of Hurricane Sandy on eastern Connecticut. Courtney stressed the economic impact of repeated storms that have hit the region over the past two years. He testified, in part:

“[Eastern Connecticut towns] have experienced just a historic repetition of bad weather that is really now starting to hit bone and muscle in terms of their ability to provide basic functions for local government.”

A transcript and video of Courtney’s testimony are below. Click on the image below to view the video.



“The urgency of the situation was shown again this morning by the Federal Reserve, which had

its reports in from the 12 regions around the country. The good news is that nine out of 12 regions were showing good signs of economic growth. The three that weren't were: New York Philadelphia and Boston.

"It was Hurricane Sandy which was identified by each one of the governors as the reason why. Again we've got to really hit the sweet spot here in terms of a good package to help this critical part of America to be part of strong...economic growth, which is again so important to all of the priorities that we face as a nation.

"Eastern Connecticut, Eastern Long Island Sound which runs from Stonington-Mystic all the way to New Haven has actually experienced four FEMA events in two years: going back to flooding in the spring of 2010, hurricane Irene, storm Alfred last year and then hurricane Sandy. In our area, because the breakwater from Long Island Sound actually doesn't extend all the way to the Stonington area, we experienced 90-mph wind gusts that coincided with high tide. We saw flooding and physical destruction that actually exceeded the hurricane from 1938, which the old timers always said was the high water mark in terms of bad weather in Connecticut.

"The only point I wanted to just share is: with these four events, these communities along the shoreline and in the interior, every single time first responders and local government have risen to the challenge in terms of making sure that immediate first responder issues were met. The 75/25 reimbursement that comes from FEMA, again given the fact that we've had a repetitive series of storms is really starting to affect the abilities of these communities to maintain standard operations.

"So, for example the city of New London which is a very distressed municipality, did everything they had to do in terms of protecting lives. But they are now looking at a structural deficit that the expenditure triggered, that is now going to put at risk possibly laying off fireman and police. And President Obama's prompt declaration was much appreciated because that took some of the doubt about whether spending money was going to rebound and boomerang against them.

"But the fact is that if we can look at that per capita threshold that triggers a higher reimbursement as we put this package together, the fact is that these communities deserve that. They have experienced just a historic repetition of bad weather that is really now starting to hit bone and muscle in terms of their ability to provide basic functions for local government. Again thank you for holding this hearing and I look forward to working with the Senate and the House bipartisan group to get the right response to the storm."

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